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MEMOIRS

OF THE

LIFE AND WRITINGS

OF

ROBERT ROBINSON,

Late Miniſter of the Diſſenting Congregation, in Saint Andrew's Pariſh, Cambridge.

By GEORGE DYER,

LATE OF EMANUEL COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

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1796.

PREFACE.

THIS volume being already ſwollen to a ſufficient bulk, it would be unreaſonable to diſtend it further by a tedious preface; though where conſiderable blame attaches, it is natural to look around for a defence. The reaſons that delayed the publication, then, which I had formed into a regular apology, on a ſerious review, are ſuppreſſed. A detail of particulars could not be introduced without appearing in the language of egotiſm: and, on the whole, the conduct of thoſe writers appears moſt worthy of imitation, who throw themſelves on the candour of their readers; preferring to be ſpattered over with other people's cenſures, to being decorated with the chaplets of their own vanity, and beſmeared with the perfumes of their own praiſe.

Of the *manner* in which theſe Memoirs are handled, a word or two ſhall be ſaid; though of the execution, the reader muſt form

his own judgment. I affect not to be thought an original; though I profess to copy no biographer, as a model. I betray, perhaps, a portion of weakness. A different conduct, at least, might have preserved me from some errors. But my eye has been fixed on Robert Robinson, a man who possessed strong characteristic features; who, in his manners, was peculiar; in his religion, a little inconstant, perhaps; in his pursuits, a great manufacturer of varieties. As he diversifies his pursuits, I diversify my chapters. The only questions with me of importance, are, Have I, on the whole, preserved the truth of character, and yet maintained something like unity of design? If so, I have accomplished all that was intended.

When Cicero described a complete orator, he copied a prototype, that existed only in his own mind. Biography is concerned with real life. "A perfect character has not been described."—It was never intended. In painting, in architecture, and in poetry, beauty is always in connection with deformity. Hence, in the two former arts, what is called the clair-obscur; and hence

in

in the two ſublimeſt poets, Homer and Milton, thoſe prominent blemiſhes. Thus it is with human character. In vulgar minds we ſee nothing either to admire, or to cenſure: their lights and ſhades produce nothing diſtinct or ſtriking: we ſurvey them in the groſs, and their ſpecks eſcape our notice. But eminent qualities are generally accompanied with great weakneſſes. Robinſon's foibles have not been concealed; yet he was an extraordinary man.

To ſome it may appear, that the writings of Robinſon are too liberally introduced.—But does not the work profeſs to be Memoirs of his writings, as well as of his life? It is not for want of materials, nor, I believe, of invention, that ſuch copious extracts are made; the various communications, with which I have been favoured, of his family and friends, as well as a ſtudied attention to the lines of his character, precluded the neceſſity of theſe quotations, as an expedient of diſtreſs. Concerning the proper mode of diſcuſſion, I may be miſtaken; but I have not acted from inconſiderateneſs or raſhneſs. In the free critiques, likewiſe,

on thoſe writings, a regard to the πρεπον, to what is proper and becoming, determined my conduct. Where I perceived the man of genius, and the philanthropiſt, I looked with eſteem; but a biographer is not compelled always to admire. He who adorns his hero with indiſcriminate praiſe, labours under as great a miſtake as he who dwells perpetually on his miſtakes: and as the latter commits an injury on his friend, the former involves himſelf in diſgrace.

If it does not appear, that I diſtort no facts,—that I miſrepreſent no characters,—that individuals, or parties, are neither traduced, nor flattered,—I have taken conſiderable pains to little purpoſe *.

Where a quotation occurs or a reference is made to a foreign author, a tranſlation is ſubjoined: no apology, it is hoped, will be expected for this practice to the learned. Many readers are addreſſed, who would not chooſe to be interrupted with extracts, which

* In the laſt paragraph of p. 397, it may appear to ſome, that I apply the term *bigot* to a party: but I mean to apply it to ſuch only of the party, as come under that character.

they

they could not comprehend. Herein the convenience of the reader is conſulted, though it is attended with an increaſe of labour. For, with the exception of two paſſages, the one from Juvenal, the other from Plutarch's Diſtinction between a Friend and Flatterer, taken from the publications of the learned Gilbert Wakefield, and Thomas Northmore, which were at hand, all the other tranſlations, as well poetical † as proſe, are my own. I poſſeſſed no tranſlations; and indeed preferred uſing my own ſenſe to borrowing other people's.

The language of equality is adopted in this volume: it is the language of truth and ſoberneſs. And were the readers to be addreſſed either as Chriſtians, as philoſophers, or as men, this poſition might eaſily be maintained. Such names only are uſed as diſtinguiſh the ſex, except where patents, degrees, and the like, give an appropriate and determinate appellation. The truth is, thoſe artificial diſtinctions, that originated

† The ſignature D is ſubjoined to ſome of the poetical tranſlations: but thoſe without the ſignature are likewiſe my own.

in tyranny, and are perpetuated by cuſtom, lie at the bottom of many ſerious evils that exiſt in ſociety: they are commenſurate with ſuch as proceed from the accumulation of property. No! the gratification of groſs or violent paſſions, the commiſſion of crimes, that call down the vengeance of the laws,—theſe are not the greateſt perverters of public order, and of public juſtice. The tyranny of cuſtom, the excluſive poſſeſſing of what ought to obtain a more general circulation, or be aſſigned to a public ſtock, the miſtaking of virtues for vices, and vices for virtues,—theſe are the great corrupters of nations. In my intercourſe with ſociety, I conform to its language: but in publications, at leaſt for ſuch as I am reſponſible, I will abide by the language of equality. In the latter caſe I bear a teſtimony to liberty; in the former I leave the reader to ſmile at my inconſiſtency. But, to ſpeak the truth, theſe titles preſent a caricature of man, while every inch of ground he treads on, every creature, whether rational, or merely animal, every propenſity of the human heart, whether virtuous or vicious, proves the deception, and mocks our pride.

My

My language, therefore, will appear naked and unadorned, and my periods will want the harmony, that accompanies a great name. Among writers I appear, as a native of Botany Bay, or Otaheite, among civiliſed nations. This inconvenience muſt be endured. France has emancipated mankind from theſe attempts at falſe greatneſs. By burſting the bars, which impriſon truth, ſhe has aggrandiſed her ſpecies.

By the doctrine of equality, I regulate my conduct in regard to Robinſon's correſpondents and friends: among theſe will be found ſome, concerning whom readers in general will feel no particular intereſt. But they were Robinſon's friends, and therefore, though unknown to fame, find an appropriate place in theſe memoirs. If the names of any of his friends are omitted, it is becauſe no letters of theirs are among the papers intruſted to my care by his family*.

Of

* It is but proper to return my thanks to all who favoured me with any communications relative to Robinſon, though principally to his family for their confidence in me, and for the accurate arrangement of letters and documents, made by William Curtis. To ſuch

Of my errors the reader is requeſted to bear two in his mind. The one is in page 2, where for "But in theſe ſentiments" ſhould be corrected to, "But in *ſome* of theſe ſentiments." In page 433, the circular letter of the Eaſtern Aſſociation of Baptiſts, held at Harlow, which is introduced as Robinſon's, was written by another miniſter, as every one

ſuch, likewiſe, as profeſſed a diſpoſition to promote this publication, acknowledgements are due; more particularly to Timothy Brown, and Robinſon's ſon in law, Samuel Brown, both of London, to William Frend, fellow of Jeſus'-College, to alderman Ind of Cambridge, and to Benjamin Flower, editor of the Cambridge Chronicle. To Edward Randall of Cambridge, author of an ingenious little work entitled Juridical Eſſays, I apologiſe for an apparent inattention to two letters of Robinſon's, communicated to me, through his friendſhip, by his brother. They arrived too late to be inſerted in their proper place. Of the name of John Audley, and others, reſpectful and affectionate mention ſhould have been made in connection with the conſtitutional ſociety formed at Cambridge, and of P. Muſgrave and others, in connection with the petition for the abolition of the ſlave trade: but, at the time, I poſſeſſed not ſpecific documents. To the author of an ingenious novel entitled "Antoinette," I am indebted for her ſincere, though ineffectual efforts to procure me documents from Norwich; and to Robinſon's two generous benefactreſſes, for their uniform good will to the family, and their favourable regards to this publication.

will

will ſee by the ſtyle, and the ſentiments. This miſtake might have been eaſily rectified, by cancelling the ſheet, on the diſcovery of the miſtake; but, on the whole, it appeared beſt to let it paſs; for the letter is not only a fair ſpecimen of the ſentiments and temper of the party, with whom Robinſon was then connected, but happens to be the letter at the very aſſociation, where the reſolution was paſſed for the publication of Robinſon's Syllabus of Lectures on the Principles of Nonconformity. A very ſerious affair was made of this reſolution in the Houſe of Commons: the Breviates, therefore, at the end, will ſhew the nature of this aſſociation, and all that paſſed relative to the publication of the lectures.

I cannot conclude without expreſſing my thanks to the printer, for his uniform and critical attention to the ſheets as they paſſed through the preſs.

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MEMOIRS

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OF

ROBERT ROBINSON.

THE hiſtory of nations, by the extent of its views, and the variety of its objects, may be reckoned the moſt important ſubject of human ſurvey. Appropriated to the proſpects of no party, it exhibits the characters of all: unconfined by the peculiarities of theological ſyſtems, and unembarraſſed by their ambiguities, it diſplays all the prominent, all the intereſting parts. The antiquarian, the politician, and the legiſlator, no leſs than the philoſopher and the moraliſt, have each his ſhare in the repreſentation, and may gratify a favourite propenſity. In the contemplation of diſtant events the curioſity is awakened, and the imagination is enlivened by their embelliſhment: while in tracing events to their cauſes, and in applying the experience of paſt ages to the wants of an exiſting people, the memory increaſes its treaſures, and the judgement advances in ſtrength.

The hiſtory of individuals opens a proſpect leſs flattering. The light and ſhade of domeſtic ſcenes ſeem to poſſeſs too little diſtinction, and too much uniformity, to furniſh materials for an elegant or magnificent picture. Private characters may, indeed, be pleaſing, and agreeable: but appear not ſo ſtrongly marked as thoſe, which ſhew themſelves in the diſplay of public events, and amidſt the changes of important revolutions.

But in theſe ſentiments, is there not deception? The hiſtory of nations, it is true, comprehending a ſurvey of many intereſting characters, muſt, of courſe, afford a greater variety of entertainment, and a more ample range for inſtruction. But if human character be eſtimated by worth and by intellect; if to eſtabliſh wiſe principles of political economy, be as beneficial to a community, as to put thoſe principles in practice, and to give them energy, Does not the dignity of biography riſe in proportion?—The life of one philoſopher, properly delineated, might deſerve equal attention with that of many heroes, whoſe exploits arreſt the attention of mankind, and adorn the page of hiſtory.

CHAP-

CHAPTER I.

From the Birth of Robert Robinſon to the time of his Apprenticeſhip in London.

ROBERT ROBINSON was born in Swaffham in the county of Norfolk, on the eighth of January 1735. His father, Michael Robinſon, was an officer in the exciſe, who bore an indifferent character: his mother, a perſon of an oppoſite deſcription, and of a reſpectable family. Her father was Robert Wilkin, of Mildenhall in Suffolk, a man poſſeſſed of ſome literature and property. He married a widow, by whom he had two children, Robert and Mary. This woman brought alſo into his family two children by a former huſband: on theſe Wilkin beſtowed a good education; but his exceſſive attachment to them encroached on the affection that belonged to his own offspring. His favourite daughter-in-law, it ſeems, had a fine voice:—he himſelf alſo performed on the violin: he was, therefore, eaſily induced to betray towards this young woman too great an indulgence: hence proceeded jealouſies in the other branches of the family, which ended in much domeſtic uneaſineſs.

His own daughter, Mary, took conſiderable

pains in the improvement of her mind, and in forming her temper by the principles of chriſtianity. In her manners ſhe was amiable, and, from her appearance when much advanced in years, had evidently been very beautiful. Several perſons of property and reſpectability requeſted her in marriage; but the old man, having private reaſons for keeping her at home, rejected their propoſals. From her father's exceſſive partiality to his wife's children by her former huſband, ſhe ſoon found home very unpleaſant.

From Mary's diary it appears, that ſhe, at length, married againſt her father's conſent,—a circumſtance highly reſented by the old man; the more ſo, as her lover was not only a perſon of an inferior ſtation, but of a profligate life. The truth ſeems to be, that her parent's cruelty diſpoſed her to ſeize the firſt opportunity of altering her condition; and anxiety is not always bleſt with foreſight, or directed by prudence. From a letter of young Robinſon's, addreſſed to his couſin, Mr. William Robinſon, dated Edinburgh, December 7, 1752, it appears, that Michael Robinſon, the father of Robert, was a native of Scotland.

Plutarch's remark is by no means accurate, that reproach is the conſtant attendant of per-

ſons, whoſe misfortune it was to be born of immoral parents,—ſtill leſs, of poor parents *. By Valerius Maximus we are told, that it was not clearly underſtood, even in their own times, what occupation was followed by the mother of Euripides, or by the father of Demoſthenes,—though it is almoſt generally agreed among the learned, that the mother of the former ſold vegetables, and the father of the latter, knives †.

But what occaſion for referring to Grecian or Roman writers? Have not ſeveral of the moſt diſtinguiſhed characters in modern times, as well of the old as new world, arrived at eminence by perſonal exertions; and from the ſhades in which they ſeemed buried, diſperſed light that illumines nations? Such were Chatham, Franklin, Laurens, and Paine.

* Πλουταρχου περι Παιδαγωγιας.
Ed. Edwards Cant. p. 6.

† Juvenal ſpeaks of him as a blackſmith:

Dîs ille adverſis genitus, fatoque ſiniſtro,
Quem pater, ardentis maſſæ fuligine lippus,
A carbone et forcipibus, gladioſque parante
Incude, et luteo Vulcano, ad rhetora miſit.
Juven. Sat. x. v. 129.

Him adverſe gods, and fate's malignant ire
Sent from the forge, the pincers, and the fire,
From all his ſooty blear-ey'd father's tools,
To con the lore of rhetoricians' ſchools.
Wakefield's Poet. Tranſl.

Was not the perſon whom kings and prieſts have adored, born in a condition of poverty, and confined to a low ſtation,—educated in an obſcure town, and devoted to an humble occupation *?

* It has been maintained by many Chriſtians, that in the writings received as ſacred, it is no where aſſerted, that Jeſus worked as a carpenter. But may it not be inferred from Mark vi. 3? That he worked at his father's trade has been admitted by many divines both orthodox and heterodox. Juſtin Martyr, in his dialogue with Trypho the Jew, aſſerts, that ploughs and yokes, and other carpenters' work were made by Jeſus. When a Chriſtian ſchoolmaſter was aſked by Libanius what the carpenter's ſon was doing? he received for anſwer, "Making a coffin for Julian." Theod. lib. 3. c. 23.

Some objections may be made to this opinion. In a very ancient book entitled the Goſpel of the Infancy, Evangelium Infantiæ, is the following paſſage: "But Joſeph going round the whole city took with him the Lord Jeſus, when men ſent for him in the way of his profeſſion to make milk-pails, ſieves, and cheſts; and the Lord Jeſus was with him, wherever he went: as often, therefore, as Joſeph had any work to be made, either longer or ſhorter, broader or narrower, the Lord Jeſus ſtretched his hands towards it, and every thing inſtantly ſucceeded to Joſeph's wiſhes; ſo that there was no occaſion for him to work, he being not very ſkilful in the trade of a carpenter." Evangelium Infantiæ ex Arabico tranſlatum Henrico Sikio Interprete, ſec. 38. This book is ſometimes called the fifth Goſpel or the Goſpel of Thomas, and generally acknowledged to be ſpurious: it is referred to merely as matter of curioſity.

Mary's

Mary's father carried his reſentment beyond decent bounds:—he would never ſee her huſband. This circumſtance much increaſed her trouble; for the huſband having perſuaded himſelf, that Wilkin would put him into one of his farms, and finding himſelf diſappointed, treated her not only with neglect, but rigor. She, however, continued accompanying him to the various places, whither he went in the character of an exciſeman, and recommended herſelf to many reſpectable families, particularly clergymen's; ſupporting herſelf and family by her own induſtry.

In this manner lived Mary Robinſon nine years at Swaffham, where her ſon Robert was born. Here her two eldeſt children were apprenticed,—the ſon to a painter, the daughter to a mantua-maker. "Her youngeſt ſon, Robert, (to uſe her own words) grew up a pretty ſcholar: he was ſeven years old when we left Swaffham, and had been at a Latin ſchool a year and an half. His maſter was very fond of him, and uſed to ſay that he never knew a child who diſcovered ſuch a capacity."

Her huſband was now called, in the courſe of his profeſſion, from Swaffham to Scarning, in the ſame county, where being ſued for a debt;

that he could not diſcharge, he was obliged to leave the country, and ſoon afterwards died, it is ſuppoſed, at Wincheſter.

At Scarning is an endowed grammar-ſchool, then under the care of a clergyman, whoſe name was Brett. By the earnings of her needle, and by keeping a lodging-houſe, Mary was enabled to pay for her ſon's education at this ſchool. Here ſeveral eminent perſons received their rudiments, particularly Edward Thurlow, late Lord Chancellor, and John Norris, late of Wilton in Norfolk, who founded a divinity profeſſorſhip at Cambridge, and bequeathed an annual premium of twelve pounds to the author of the beſt Engliſh eſſay, being a bachelor of arts, on a ſacred ſubject.

Ever ſince her marriage, and, particularly, during this period, great were the difficulties of Mary; but ſhe alſo poſſeſſed great ſources of comfort. The cruel behaviour of her father, the immoral conduct of her huſband, and the narrowneſs of her circumſtances, conſpired to involve her in ſevere diſtreſs: but in the pleaſures of religion, in the kind attention of friends, and in the promiſing hopes of her ſon, ſhe obtained relief and conſolation. Brett, ſtrongly attached to his young pupil, and affected at the numberleſs diſappointments of the mother,

mother, now unable to bear the expenſes of his education, ſtill requeſted his attendance, and gave him inſtruction gratis.

But difficulties ſtill continued to increaſe. For ſeveral years after marriage, Mary uſed to receive from her father preſents of money and of clothes for her children: but the old man, finding that the huſband abuſed his liberality, diſcontinued it. The property alſo, which by right of inheritance ought to have fallen to her at her father's death, was bequeathed to a favourite woman, with whom he cohabited. Her huſband, too, dying ſoon afterwards, ſhe was deprived of all aſſiſtance from him; and, to compleat the difficulties, her brother failed in buſineſs. Thus ſurrounded with diſtreſs, ſhe ſold the little ſhe poſſeſſed, and directed her attention to inquire after a ſituation for herſelf and ſon.

Marks of uncommon genius had by this time appeared in young Robinſon, and conſiderable advances were made by him in ſuch branches of learning as are uſually taught in grammar ſchools. Of the French language he gained a conſiderable knowledge, which was the more eaſily acquired, as the French uſher lodged at his mother's houſe. With claſſical literature he was better acquainted than boys uſually are at ſuch

ſuch an early period: he alſo wrote a neat hand; but ſeems never to have gained any knowledge of common arithmetic,—a defect the rather to be mentioned, as flowing from a prevailing omiſſion in many public grammar-ſchools:—and, What neglect more ſerious can be conceived?—the art of arithmetic not only being of all others the moſt uſeful in commercial and domeſtic life, but indiſpenſably neceſſary for an acquaintance with algebra, and the mathematics. The mother had once entertained hopes, that his grandfather would have ſupported him at college:—but he was no more: ſhe was, therefore, under a neceſſity of taking her ſon from ſchool, and ſeeking for him an employment.

It may juſt be obſerved here in paſſing, that an anceſtor of Robinſon's had been formerly of Jeſus College, Cambridge, and afterwards vicar of All-Saints; which is the rather mentioned, as he preceded Robinſon in diſſeminating the principles of the puritans, in the beginning of the laſt century.

Brett, Robinſon's ſchool-maſter, becoming acquainted with the mother's intentions, promiſed to be her friend, and thinking it a pity, that a youth of ſuch fine talents ſhould be a menial ſervant, endeavoured to procure him a place, favourable to his ſtudious diſpoſition. To what

what cauſe it was owing, that the ſcheme failed, is not ſpecified;—moſt probably, to Robinſon's ignorance of arithmetic, or to the mother's being unable to give a premium. By her diary it appears, that a female friend in London wrote to her, with the information, that, if ſhe would accept of a trade for her ſon, her brother would take him apprentice without a premium. This was Joſeph Anderſon, a hair-dreſſer in Crutched Friars. The propoſal was accepted:—the mother agreeing to find her ſon in cloaths, ſettled in London, and, with great induſtry, ſupported herſelf, and procured neceſſaries for Robert. The indentures bear date March 7, 1749.

In the preceding relation concerning Robinſon's mother, more minuteneſs has been ſtudied than was at firſt intended, or than the province of biography demanded. But, in noticing the unſophiſticated virtues of private life, and in paying a tribute of reſpect to one who eminently poſſeſſed them, the pleaſure is not inconſiderable. How frequently is the luſtre of public actions tarniſhed by private vices! And, while extenſive advantages are produced to ſociety, the individuals who perform them may be entitled to little praiſe: for, in the ſame manner as learning may be ſeparated from the elegance of taſte, public exertions

tions may be unaccompanied with the principles of goodneſs

See Cromwell damn'd to everlaſting fame!
POPE.

I once accidentally met with a man, who had been a journeyman in the ſame ſhop where Robinſon was an apprentice. He appeared a ſenſible perſon; and with his account of his young friend I was highly pleaſed. "Robert Robinſon!" exclaimed he, on finding I was acquainted with him,—"Robert Robinſon was one of the moſt ingenious, induſtrious and virtuous youths I ever knew; and his maſter underſtood his worth. He came to him under particular circumſtances; he was a fine ſcholar; but had been uſed ill by his relations; he poſſeſſed talents that would have qualified him to have been as good a lord-chancellor as his old ſchool-fellow, Lord Thurlow; it was not expected that he would ſerve out his time, and, before the expiration of his apprenticeſhip, his maſter returned his indentures: he was more employed in reading, than working; in following preachers, than attending cuſtomers; yet with the entire conſent of both maſter and ſervants: we all loved Robert; we knew him to be an extraordinary youth, and concluded, that though now a hair-dreſſer, he would live to be a great man."

This

This repreſentation agrees in the main with what others have ſaid concerning Robinſon during this period: ſome grains of allowance muſt, however, be thrown into the account: for from ſeveral parts of a diary kept by him during this period, it may be inferred, that his ſtudious caſt of mind frequently expoſed him to rebukes: and he has often been heard to ſay, that as he roſe ſometimes by three or four o'clock in the morning, Anderſon would forbid him the uſe of candle. In his diary is frequently read, " I roſe this morning at five —at four." He paid an invariable attention through life to early riſing, adopting the Latin adage, *Mane Muſis amicum*—the morning is favourable to the Muſes. This excellence, indeed, he ſeems to have poſſeſſed by inheritance. At the advanced age of fourſcore and upward, his mother uſed to riſe by four o'clock.

In induſtry Robinſon could be exceeded by no man; and it is evident, that he not only left ſchool, well acquainted with the rudiments of polite learning, but applied himſelf to ſtudy, during his apprenticeſhip, with all the attention that a ſtate of ſervitude allowed. In his diaries, indeed, when in London, and when after a preacher in Norwich, little more than ſuch remarks are to be diſcovered as commonly occur in the journals of the Methodiſts; but in

ſeveral

ſeveral ſmaller works, publiſhed by him a few years after he was ſettled at Cambridge, are to be perceived traces of a conſiderable knowledge of books, as well as of an extenſive acquaintance with the human character,—evident marks, that he was a regular ſtudent, though he was, certainly, in a great meaſure, a ſelf-taught man. In this reſpect he reſembled ſome of the moſt diſtinguiſhed characters, Muretus, Julius Scaliger, and Eraſmus. The latter, who became one of the moſt elegant ſcholars of Europe, was indebted to a preceptor for little more than the elements of Greek and Latin*.

Maſters, ſays Rouſſeau, were not neceſſary to ſuch as nature deſigned to make diſciples. Bacon, Des Cartes, and Newton, the maſters of mankind, had none themſelves. What guide could have conducted them as far as their great geniuſſes led them? Common maſters would only have cramped their capacities, by confining them within the limits of their own†.

It is obſervable that the man who is the ſtandard of pure and elegant diction among the Latin writers, had been of that order, who to a proverb are reckoned leſs likely to excel in

* See Jortin's Life of Eraſmus, book the firſt.

† Un Diſcours par J. J. Rouſſeau, &c.

the παῤῥησια of language, I mean ſlaves *: and Plautus,—of whom Varro ſays, that, if the Muſes were willing to ſpeak Latin, they would expreſs themſelves in his language,—if hiſtory ſpeak truth, let himſelf out to grind corn ‡. When Dr. Johnſon ſays, of Savage †, that he was employed at the awl longer than he was willing to confeſs, he expreſſes what reflects no honour on his hero.

There is no ſufficient reaſon to believe that Robinſon was actually aſhamed of the circumſtances of his employment, though obvious reaſons might exiſt, why he never made them, in future life, the ſubject of his converſation. Situated in the precincts of an univerſity, where, in the early part of his miniſtry, diſſenters were reckoned degraded characters, and where, in ſubſequent periods, the preacher rendered himſelf obnoxious by his writings, to make any ſpecific declaration on this head, he might deem neither neceſſary, nor prudent. But his frank and ſingular behaviour towards the perſon mentioned above, during ſeveral viſits paid by him at Cheſterton, the particulars of which were related to me by the man himſelf, and the

* Vide Fabrit i Bibliotheca Latina, lib. 1.

† Aulus Gellius, lib. iii. 3.

‡ Lives of the Engliſh Poets, vol. 3. Savage.

unequivocal

unequivocal mention of his trade in memorandums, are a teſtimony that he felt, at bottom, no ſhame on this head. Theſe niceties, however, might be thought improper to introduce in funeral ſermons; or, if the preachers poſſeſſed accurate information, they might feel a reſpectable delicacy *.

* See the Sermons on the Death of Robert Robinſon, by Dr. Prieſtley, Dr. Rees, and Dr. Toulmin.

CHAP-

CHAPTER II.

From the time of his Apprenticeſhip in London, to his ſettling at Cambridge.

NOT to enquire into the riſe and progreſs of either religious or enthuſiaſtic affections*, or to diſcuſs the queſtion concerning the "five points," and without undertaking to paſs unqualified cenſure, or exceſſive panegyric, either on the Arminian or Calviniſtic Methodiſts, ſuffice it to ſay, that Robinſon very early in life became a regular attendant on the preaching of the latter: he was educated in the church of England, though he ſoon proved an unruly diſciple.

During his apprenticeſhip in London, his favourite preachers were John Gill and John Guiſe,—the former eminent as the moſt rabbinical doctor of his age, and for writing, beſides a variety of other theological works, nine folio volumes on the ſcriptures; the latter ce-

* The doctrine of "religious affections" has been amply diſcuſſed by an American divine, on the principles, at this time maintained by Robinſon. The writer poſſeſſed conſiderable talents, and the treatiſe, as conformable to thoſe principles, is judicious.—See "A Treatiſe concerning Religious Affections, by Jonathan Edwards."

C lebrated

lebrated for his Commentary on the New Teſtament. He became alſo a ſincere admirer of William Romaine, late rector of St. Ann's, Blackfriars: but the miniſter to whom he was the moſt affectionately attached was George Whitfield, whom he called his ſpiritual father. When at Norwich and Cambridge, his letters to the latter breathe the genuine reſpect of a dutiful ſon, and the ſelf-abaſing language of a ſincere Calviniſt.

It is not improbable, that Robinſon received a ſtrong bias at a very early period towards the miniſtry, by obſerving the wonderful exertions of George Whitfield and his fellow labourers at the Tabernacle. At this place Whitfield accidentally read one or two of his ſpiritual ſon's letters, while he was preſent;—an event, which the latter ſeems to have conſidered as important; who cries out with rapture on the occaſion, in a diary kept by him at this time, "What hath God wrought!"

To dwell too minutely on the incidents of his life, while an apprentice in London, would be both unneceſſary and tedious, though he kept ſo ſingular a diary, that they might be traced with conſiderable eaſe; for, notwithſtanding the neceſſary engagements of his calling, the minuteneſs of his diary is ſurpriſing.

ing. His method of journaliſing he derived from George Whitfield.

To thoſe who enjoyed his friendſhip in the latter part of his life, or may now be diſpoſed to form an acquaintance with him for the firſt time, a quotation or two from his "experience*" may afford ſome entertainment. It will, at leaſt, diſplay the genius of methodiſm: and the reader is at liberty to ſmile or look grave, as he thinks proper, provided he indulges no malevolent paſſion. The artiſt who would ſtudy the human figure, and perceive its ſymmetry and proportion, ſhould ſurvey it in all attitudes. Thus the philoſopher traces the progreſs of mind, and aſcertains the human character.

Lord's day November.—Heard Mr. Whitfield this morning at Tabernacle, Acts iv. 13. Dr. Gill went on this forenoon, Job xii. from the 7th to the end of the 12th verſe. He was very precious to me. In the afternoon he was in Daniel viii. 9.—very excellent indeed to my ſoul. I drank tea afterwards with Mr. Innys, and had ſome Chriſtian converſation: he read to me part of the letter which he is about to ſend to the biſhop of London. Lord, proſper it.

* For the meaning of the word "experience," ſee p. 23.

Wedneſday.—This being lord mayor's-day, I went and ſaw him (Sir Charles Aſgill) and the aldermen go from Guildhall, to take water for Weſtminſter.—After dinner I went to Weſtminſter bridge, and ſaw them paſs in the barges by water, after which I returned to Cheapſide: ſaw the man in armour, and the gentry return: firſt lord keeper in black robes, trimmed with gold: then lord chancellor in ſcarlet: then lord treaſurer in black, as the other: after them the judges in ſcarlet gowns with white linen ſleeves, black ſilk girdles, and black ſilk round their necks, full bottom wigs and black on the crown: afterward lord mayor, aldermen and ſheriffs in ſcarlet, and gold chains,—exceeding grand *.

Thurſday.—I think this day our dear king is ſeventy-four years of age. O! my ſoul, bleſs God for the liberty we enjoy under his mild and gentle reign. Lord, bleſs him with the choiceſt of thy bleſſings ſpiritual and temporal! I went to the monthly meeting at Mr. Hall's, and found it was good to be there. A good man in his own hair, from Deptford, prayed firſt: then old Mr. Crookſhanks

* Robinſon here obſerves, "that what moſt pleaſed him was his evening entertainment: for he went to Tabernacle, and heard George Whitfield ſpiritualiſe the lord mayor's ſhow."

preached

preached a ſweet ſermon, very awakening, from Hebrews xi. 7:—the oldeſt preachers are moſt thundering of late. God proſper them! Mr. Hitchin prayed next very ſweetly; then Mr. Conder diſmiſſed us with an affecting prayer. Lord, hear us for this ſinful land!

Friday November.—As the Lord has been pleaſed ſo ſignally to own and bleſs the Pruſſian arms, (having on the 5th of November, when many, I truſt, were praying for him, enabled him with about 1700 men to conquer an army of French and Auſtrians of 60 or 70,000: the Lord ſtirred up the king of Pruſſia and his ſoldiers to pray: they kept up three faſt-days, and ſpent about an hour praying and ſinging pſalms before they engaged the enemy: O! how good it is to pray and fight!)—we kept this day at Tabernacle giving thanks to God: Mr. Whitfield expounded the twentieth chapter of the Second Book of Chronicles, very ſweetly: in the morning at ſeven he explained thirteen verſes, and at noon to the end of the thirtieth verſe, and ſweetly improved them; and then ſang, "Rejoice! the Lord is King*."—Heard Mr. Skelton to night from Romans iv. 25.

* A hymn well-known among the methodiſts.

Saturday.—Heard Mr. Whitfield to night from Revelations, ii. 9.

Friday December.—Heard Mr. John Weſtley from Eccleſiaſtes, ii. 1. I liked him well; they kept a watch night, and ſpent from 8 till 11 in prayer and ſinging. It was much bleſſed to me.

Saturday December.—Heard Mr. Whitfield very ſweetly to night from Exodus xxxiii. 18.

This part of his diary has been taken at hazard, not as containing any thing more than uſually intereſting. He ſometimes enters more into particulars.

Among his diaries when in London is alſo found a copy of verſes, of no great merit, indeed, inſcribed on the back de Georgio Whitfield, and love letters. But, whether his fair one was cruel or proud, or he himſelf inconſtant, does not appear. On the back of one letter, the laſt written to this fair one, are theſe words, "litera ſcripta, ſed non miſſa, ad dominam...." Theſe diaries and love letters prove Robert to have been a warm enthuſiaſt of the moſt innocent deſcription: the former containing little elſe, but what is called by the methodiſts "experience;" which is uſually compoſed

poſed of heads of ſelf-examination, temptation, ſpiritual deſertion, conſolation, ſupport, &c. His love letters contain nothing but effuſions of religion, rather than amorous paſſion.

By degrees he rendered himſelf conſpicuous, as a profeſſor of religion, ſo as to be thought by many a fit perſon for the miniſtry; and notwithſtanding the humiliating languag that appears on the ſurface of the following paſſages, his thoughts were wholly engroſſed in preparing for his favourite employment.

" It is ſtrange, ſays he, in ſome part of his diary, that people all run away with a notion of my being called to the miniſtry. Lord, accompliſh thy will, is all I have to ſay. If my king ſends an ambaſſador, I know he will ſend credentials with him."

In another place, he ſays, " This night I ſupped at —— who wants me to join a church, that I may be ſent out into the miniſtry. But, God forbid, that I ſhould run, before I am ſent, or, being ſent, I ſhould ſeek any ſiniſter end! Oh! the weight, the inſupportable weight of the miniſtry! From ſome part of his diary, it ſeems he uſed occaſionally to preach for an hour together in his own room to himſelf: which was probably one mean, by which he acquired that great facility of colloquial addreſs,

in which, as doctor Price, on hearing him preach in London, obſerved, that he excelled beyond any man he ever heard. He appears to have entertained the idea of being a preacher as early as the nineteenth year of his age: this inclination had been much encouraged by a worthy diſſenting miniſter, of Iſleham, Cambridgeſhire.

Having received his indentures from his maſter, and leaving behind him an unblemiſhed character in London, he went to his native country, Norfolk. Here he commenced a preacher among the methodiſts. The innocence of his youth, the agreeableneſs of his manners, and the enthuſiaſm of his genius, all conſpired to render him popular.

Whether young Robinſon, in his journey to Norwich, acted under the belief of an immediate call, or was influenced by the perſuaſion of others,—whether the meanneſs of his employment mortified, or diſappointment in love dejected him, does not appear: but it ſeems ſurpriſing, that he ſhould be preaching at Norwich among the methodiſts without even the knowledge of his ſpiritual father, the great apoſtle of that people. Among his letters is found the following from George Whitfield, dated May 25, 1758.

DEAR

DEAR MR. ROBINSON,

Why did you not make your caſe known to me before you left London? I ſhould be glad to know what motives induced you to leave it? And, how you came to go to Norwich? And, what proſpect you have of a growing people? You may ſend a line to London, and it will be ſent after me into the country. I have now opened my ſummer's campaign. The Redeemer hath given us a good beginning: Who knows but we ſhall have a glorious ending? He is all in all.—You find that he ſtrengtheneth and bleſſeth you in his work, and cauſeth your rod to bud and bloſſom.—That your bow may abide in ſtrength, that you may be cloathed with humility, and that the arms of your hands may be continually ſtrengthened by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob, is the earneſt prayer of, Mr. Robinſon,

Your Affectionate Friend in our
Common Lord,
GEORGE WHITFIELD.

His firſt ſermon he preached to a few poor people at Mildenhall, from Job, ix. 2. He was ſoon after invited to the Tabernacle in Norwich, where he ſpoke for the firſt time to a numerous auditory, from Rev: ii. 8, 9, 10. Of this diſcourſe he obſerves, "The Lord was very

ry gracious to me, and gave me ſtrength equal to my day. He favoured me with great boldneſs, and owned the word to me." He alſo preached ſometimes at Iſleham in Cambridgeſhire, Fernecet, and Claxton in Norfolk, and reſided occaſionally in London.

During his continuance in Norfolk he kept his diary on a larger ſcale, and diſcovered particular attention in recording his religious feelings, when ſpeaking in public, or diſcharging any other miniſterial duty. Agreeably to the practice of the methodiſts, his addreſſes were always extemporaneous; and being a believer in ſupernatural influence, he was accuſtomed to aſcend the pulpit without the leaſt preparation. "I could not, ſays he, in one part of his diary, get a text from the Lord, till the laſt verſe of the hymn. I took theſe words after from Solomon's Song, "Comfort me with apples, for I am ſick of love." He obſerves, he ſhould, indeed, have preached from this verſe before, but he could not tell the meaning of *being ſick of love:* "however, the Lord opened it to me."

When reſiding in London he had been uſed to attend miniſters who excelled in ſpiritualiſing Solomon's Song; and he ſeems himſelf to have poſſeſſed a great knack at this religious trifling. How little did he think that he ſhould

live

live to believe it nothing but a pretty love ſong, addreſſed to ſome mortal beauty* !

The ſpiritualiſing of the ſcriptures, as it is called, of which the above affords a ſmall ſpecimen, muſt not be thought peculiar to the experience book of a young man of warm and lively paſſions. From the days of Auguſtine to thoſe of Dr. Gill, how many folios upon folios, written by grave and learned men, have trifled in the ſame manner! Dr. Gill, and John Huſſey, whom there will be occaſion to mention again, poſſeſſed wonderful ſkill this way. Gill has written a large quarto volume of explications and ſpiritual commentaries on this book; ſo has William Romaine. And in a moſt extraordinary book on the *Glory of Chriſt Unveiled*, which is full of this ſort of interpretations of the ſcripture, written by Huſſey, it is ſeriouſly maintained, that "The ten commandments are broken by believing Arminianiſm. Arminians, ſays this ſingular writer, make a divinity of man's power, and ſo are guilty of idolatry. The ſecond command is broken by bowing down to this idol. The third is broken by ſpeaking againſt effectual grace. For to do this is to take God's name in vain. Arminians break the ſeventh by committing adultery with this idol, the work of

* See Claude's "Eſſay on the Compoſition of a Sermon."

their

their own hands; and they break the tenth by coveting their neighbours' intereſt in God and Chriſt *."

But do I mean to inſult the aſhes of Gill and Huſſey? By no means. Theſe men, it is true, were diſſenters, but, however full of reveries, poſſeſſed no common talents, and conſiderable learning. "How eaſy would it be, to ſhew, to borrow Robinſon's words, in ſpite of lord Clarendon and Dr. Burn, that the diſſenters have not a brother ſo ignorant and impudent, as to dare to preach, even in this way of ſpiritualiſing, to ſeven old women in a hog-ſtye, what doctors and biſhops have preached before univerſities and kings †!" and, indeed, among the antients, Plato, and afterwards his admirers and imitators, the profound Proclus, and the zealous Julian, trifled not leſs ridiculouſly. Can the ſpiritual commentaries, penned by Chriſtians, concerning the Sun of Righteouſneſs, exceed what the latter has advanced in his oration to the Sovereign Sun ‡?

I cannot

* See Huſſey's "Glory of Chriſt Unveiled," page 526, quoted by Robinſon in Claude's Eſſay on the Compoſition a Sermon, Vol. I. page 125. notes.

† See Claude's "Eſſay on the Compoſition of a Sermon," Vol. I. Advertiſement.

‡ See particularly the Parmenides of Plato, and, among the later Platoniſts, Proclus. The emperor Julian's works contain many curioſities. His ſingular rhapſodies the Engliſh

I cannot proceed without ſtopping to make a remark on the practice among the methodiſts of keeping a journal. A diary, as a kind of check to the waywardneſs of paſſion or any frivolity of character, or as a regiſter of the moſt important tranſactions of life, preſents nothing, either vain or enthuſiaſtic. This practice has been adopted by the wiſeſt and moſt rational of mankind. The folly and vanity conſiſt in recording frivolous purſuits and unintereſting occurrences with an air of ſerioufneſs; in concealing ſpiritual pride under the language of humility. In his London diary, Robinſon makes the following memorandum: "Such a day I went to dine on a gooſe: after ſervice I went to Mr. —— to ſupper, and had part of a pudding, made of ſome rice ſent by my dear ſpiritual father." He frequently ſpeaks of himſelf in terms of the moſt degrading humility, yet, at the ſame time, diſcovers ſufficient ſelf-complacency.

Such things may be eaſily forgiven in the

Engliſh reader may be acquainted with in an Engliſh tranſlation, by Thomas Taylor. See two Orations of the emperor Julian; one to the *Sovereign Sun*, and the other *To the Mother of the Gods*, with notes by Thomas Taylor, a tranſlator, who, though he cannot be always complimented for his verbal accuracy, is entitled to reſpect, as unfolding at large to Engliſh readers the Platonic philoſophy; a department, in which he diſplays both induſtry and talents,

haſty

haſty ſcribble of a young apprentice: but how many things equally ridiculous, and infinitely more offenſive, recur in thoſe journals, which he received as models!

While he was at Norwich, his affections centered in a young woman of the name of Ellen Payne, whom he afterwards married: but amongſt the methodiſts he continued not long. From a letter written to Whitfield at this time, it appears, that one of their preachers was an immoral character, and could neither agree with Robinſon nor the other miniſters: and from ſeveral parts of his diary, that ſome of the people alſo were groſsly profligate.

Many perſons amongſt the methodiſts poſſeſs the pureſt affections and moſt correct morals: George Whitfield was always ſpoken of by Robinſon as ſuch a character. But imaginary aſſiſtances are frequently productive of extravagant conduct: the moſt rapturous affections are ſometimes the moſt inconſtant, and often very vicious*. Love of truth and of virtue alone is conſiſtent.

On

* "There are two ſorts of hypocrites,—one that are deceived with their outward morality, and the other are thoſe that are deceived with falſe diſcoveries, and elevations, which often

On leaving the methodiſts, our young preacher, with thirteen other perſons attached to his ſentiments, formed a congregational or independent church in the pariſh of St. Paul, Norwich: when, according to the practice of the independent churches, he drew up his Confeſſion of Faith, comprehending the ſeveral points of Calviniſtic doctrine, which it is unneceſſary to particulariſe here, as there will be a better opportunity hereafter.

At this place he became the ſettled paſtor, and adminiſtered the rites commonly called Baptiſm and the Lord's Supper. Here he baptiſed infants; but being invited from Norwich to Cambridge, a ſituation where his genius and

often cry down works and men's own righteouſneſs, and talk much of free grace; but at the ſame time make a righteouſneſs of their own diſcoveries, and of their humiliation, and exalt themſelves to heaven with them. Theſe two kinds of hypocrites Mr. Shephard, in his Expoſition of the Parable of the Ten Virgins, diſtinguiſhes by the names of legal and evangelical hypocrites, and often ſpeaks of the latter as the worſt. And it is evident, that the latter are by far the moſt confident in their hope, and with the moſt difficulty brought off from it: I have ſcarcely known an inſtance of ſuch an one in my life that has been undeceived. The chief grounds of the confidence of them are, the very ſame kind of impulſes and ſuppoſed revelations, (ſometimes with texts of ſcripture and ſometimes without) that ſo many of late have had concerning future events,

and his character had room to unfold themſelves, he did not continue long with this congregation.

The invitation from Cambridge he received in the ſpring of 1759,—being then twenty three years of age, having preached three among the methodiſts. Previouſly to his leaving Norfolk he had been baptiſed according to the practice of the baptiſt churches, at Ellingham, by a baptiſt miniſter, whoſe name was Dunkhorn, ſucceſſor to Wright, well known among the Calviniſtic diſſenters of that county as a writer of hymns.

July

events, calling theſe impulſes about their good eſtate, the witneſs of the ſpirit, entirely miſunderſtanding the nature of the witneſs of the ſpirit. Thoſe that have had viſions and impulſes about other things, it has generally been to reveal ſuch things, as they are deſirous and fond of; and, no wonder that perſons who give heed to ſuch things, have the ſame ſort of viſions and impulſes about eternal ſalvation, to reveal to them that their ſins are forgiven, that their names are written in the book of life, that they are in high favour with God, &c. and eſpecially when they earneſtly ſeek, expect and wait for evidence of their election and ſalvation, this way, as the ſureſt and moſt glorious evidence of it. Neither is it any wonder, that when they have ſuch a ſuppoſed revelation of their good eſtate, it raiſes in them the higheſt degree of confidence of it. It is found by abundant experience, that thoſe who are led away by impulſes and imagined revelations, are extremely confident:

July 8, 1759. He preached for the firſt time at Stoneyard Cambridge from the firſt of Corinthians xv. 3. and at the end of the week returned to Norwich. He was on trial two years; but for prudent reaſons ſettled not at Cambridge till the ſpring of 1761. A ſhort time before his being appointed miniſter at Cambridge, he married the perſon, to whom he paid his addreſſes in Norfolk.

On his arrival in Cambridgeſhire he reſided at Fulbourn with a very honeſt man, a member of the congregation at Cambridge. Whether he here became firſt acquainted with commiſſary Graves, I know not: there is a letter of Graves's, to him, written ſome years afterwards, expreſſing the higheſt admiration of Robinſon's talents, and labours in the cauſe of religious liberty,—noticing at the ſame time ſome particular acts of his benevolence to the poor. Graves at the ſame time obſerves that he thought it incumbent on him to make the moſt honourable mention of him in all the circles of his acquaintance, whether in the town or the univerſity, which he failed not to do *.

confident: they ſuppoſe, that the great Jehovah has declared theſe and thoſe things to them, and having his immediate teſtimony, a ſtrong confidence is the higheſt virtue." Edwards on Religious Affections, Part ii. § xi.

* Theſe circumſtances are noticed as honourable in

Graves, and were always mentioned by Robinſon in terms of reſpect: for the latter was at the time a very poor diſſenting miniſter, and the diſſenters at Cambridge were of no account. Graves on the other hand was a churchman of large fortune and wealthy connections: his rank in the univerſity very high.

CHAP-

CHAPTER III.

The Riſe and Eſtabliſhment of the Diſſenters at Cambridge.

WHEN the intereſting character of Robinſon is recollected, as well as the part acted by him at Cambridge, ſome indulgence, perhaps, will be allowed to an hiſtorical review of the riſe of the diſſenting intereſt in that town. The information, and, ſometimes, the words are taken from the diſſenters' church book, written with great care by Robinſon, and entitled "Memoirs of the proteſtant diſſenting church of Chriſt uſually denominated baptiſts, voluntarily congregated out of ſeveral pariſhes, and aſſembling for divine worſhip at their meeting houſe in St. Andrew's Pariſh, Cambridge," written in 1774. Robinſon evidently intended that ſuch uſe of thoſe memoirs ſhould be made.

The founders of the firſt diſſenting churches in the town and county of Cambridge were Francis Holcroft, M. A. Fellow of Clare Hall, and Joſeph Oddie, M. A. Fellow of Trinity College, with other coadjutors, among whom were ſeveral heads of colleges, Dr. Tuckney, maſter of St. John's, Moſes of Pembroke, Dell of Caius, Sadler of Magdalen, Bond of Trinity

Hall, and forty more perſons ejected from their preferments by the Act of Uniformity, 1662. But in order to preſerve method, it may be neceſſary to go more backward ſtill.

In 1534, the univerſity of Cambridge, by a decree to which was affixed the public ſeal, renounced popery; and in 1538 Henry the Eighth having diveſted the pope of his power, and clothed himſelf with the ſpoils, altered the Engliſh church.

In doctrine the proteſtants aſſerted an uniformity of ſentiment, and, with a few exceptions, were conſiſtent: but in diſcipline they widely differed; one party preferring the epiſcopalian form, the ſecond the preſbyterian, a third the congregational, or independent. The ſplendour of epiſcopacy beſt aſſorts with the genius of a court, and, accordingly, that form was eſtabliſhed by law in England, to the excluſion of even toleration for the other two. Thoſe, however, who diſapproved ſome of the ceremonies, and diſcipline of the church, had indulged hopes of an union, and for ſome time conformed to the eſtabliſhed religion; but, finding at length their hopes ill-founded, ſeparated. Thoſe who firſt formed a church were the preſbyterians, who aſſembled at Wandſworth, November 20, 1572. The independents formed their firſt church in England in 1616.

The baptiſts in London 1640; and thus, as Robinſon expreſſes it, "proteſtants became diſſenters."

In the church book alluded to above, is a judicious ſtatement of the leading principles of the church of England, together with the objections of the proteſtant diſſenters. But to exhibit them here would lead too far from our main deſign, and the reader may find them ſtated more at large in books written profeſſedly on this ſubject *.

"Reverend Francis Holcroft, I ſhall here uſe Robinſon's words, was the ſon of ſir —— Holcroft of Weſtham near London. Mr. David Clarkſon was his tutor; and Tillotſon, afterwards archbiſhop, was his chum, a college term for a chamber fellow †. He was ejected from the living of Baſingbourn by the act of uniformity, and, for preaching privately in Cambridgeſhire and places adjacent, was impriſoned nine years from 1663 to 1672. He had been ſentenced to quit the realm in three months or

* See particularly De Laune's Plea, Piercii Vindiciæ Fratrum Nonconformiſtarum, Dr. Furneaux's Letters to Judge Blackſtone, Neale's Hiſtory of the Puritans, lately republiſhed by Dr. Toulmin, and Calamy's Abridgement, lately republiſhed by Samuel Palmer, &c.

† See Birch's Life of Archbiſhop Tillotſon.

to ſuffer death. But the earl of Angleſea procured his reprieve."

After his enlargement, he was impriſoned again three years for the ſame offence, as before: during his confinement in the caſtle, his keeper often allowed him to go out, and preach in the night,—and while he was in the fleet-priſon, ſo many people flocked to him, that he often, through the heat of the place, uſed to preach in his waiſtcoat, and ruined his health.

After his releaſe he returned to Cambridge, and became an itinerant preacher, forming many churches into congregational order. While at college he was communicant with Jephcot of Swaffham: he was the father of independency in this county, and died January 6, 1692, in the ſixty-third year of his age, Calamy ſays at Triplow, report ſays at Granſden.

"Reverend Joſeph Oddie, or Oddy, I here borrow Robinſon's words, born at Leeds in Yorkſhire, was maſter of arts, and fellow of Trinity College, and vicar of Meldred, from which place he was ejected. For preaching in and about Cambridge he was often impriſoned, once five years.

In 1672 he was releaſed, and, with his colleague

league Holcroft, became an itinerant preacher. He was much followed, and often preached abroad. This bleſſed man, as Robinſon expreſſes it, died May 3, 1687."

The church at Hoghill was congregated when James the ſecond granted toleration, and for many years had Joſeph Huſſey for its paſtor. Robinſon calls him the learned and famous Joſeph Huſſey; and famous he was in the independent churches of thoſe times. His doctrines were rigid, but many ſtill think them ſavoury meat. He was born March 1660, ſettled in Cambridge 1691, and removed from thence to London in March 1720. He left behind him an audience of upwards of 1000 perſons, and a church conſiſting of upwards of 150 members. He died in London, November, 1726.

After Huſſey's departure, there were two candidates for the paſtoral office, Throgmorton and Davis: the majority who were the poorer party, were for chooſing Davis; the minority who were the richer members were for Throgmorton. The adherents of the latter did not amount to 50. Thoſe of the former to more than three times that number. For ſome time the matter was compromiſed by an agreement, that one ſhould preach in the morning,

the other in the afternoon: but on March 26, 1720, Throgmorton's party, thinking that numbers ſhould yield to money, and as little acquainted in reality with liberty as the epiſcopalians, whom they thought tyrants by profeſſion, forgetting, as Robinſon gently expreſſes himſelf, the principles of diſſent, refuſed by a conſtable the pulpit to Davis. He was, therefore, obliged to withdraw, and, with one hundred members, hired and fitted up a ſtable and granary in St. Andrew's pariſh in a place called Stone Yard, which they hired for twelve years. Davis preached there for the firſt time April 16, 1721.

In 1723, this new church was broken again, by an unhappy affair, into two parts, in conſequence of which Davis was excluded by a majority from the paſtoral office. Thoſe who were engaged in his intereſt believed him innocent of the charges brought againſt him, and ſeparating again from the new church fitted up a place at Barnewell*, a village two miles from Cambridge on the Eaſt ſide.

The

* As this village will, perhaps, recall to the memory of ſome Cambridge ſtudents certain juvenile indiſcretions, unneceſſary to record here,—and as the term Barnewell may be thought derived from ſome correlative circumſtance, the reader is here preſented with the following quotation

The church at Stone-yard, which conſiſted of eighty-eight members, now thought of chooſing a new miniſter; and the baptiſts being the majority propoſed one of their own perſuaſion, and a ſtrict communion, that is, that none ſhould be admitted to what is called the Lord's Supper, but ſuch as had been baptiſed* by immerſion on their own profeſſion of faith.

The queſtion concerning ſtrict and mixed communion, as they are called, has formed and ſtill forms, a very ſerious controverſy among the baptiſts, and independents; to diſcuſs it here would be improper. Robinſon has himſelf agitated the queſtion in a ſmall work hereafter to be noticed. The firſt baptiſt church in

quotation from Caius' Hiſtory of Cambridge: Vocabatur is locus Barnewell, hoc eſt puerorum fons, quod in ejus loci medio vividi purique fontes ſcaturiebant, quodque pueri atque adoleſcentes annis ſingulis in vigilia Sancti Johannis Baptiſtæ eo concurrentes luctari et aliis luſibus ſe exercere conſueverant. Cujus ſpectaculi cauſa, concurrentes multitudine mercatores ſpe lucri ducti negotiandi cauſa advolarant. This, according to Chroniclers and Caius, is the origin of the town and fair.

* By baptiſm, the baptiſts always underſtand, and they are indiſputably accurate, immerſion. It ſhould be obſerved, that the word, βαπτισμος, from whence comes baptiſm, was not uſed either in Egypt, Syria, or Greece itſelf, till the time of Chriſt. Sophocles uſes the word βαπτω, Plutarch βαπτιζω, and for lavacrum, and the act of immerſion, Lucian uſes βαπτισις.

England

England was for free or mixed communion: the paſtor's name was Jeſſe.

" The baptiſts, as Robinſon continues, loth to ſeparate, and thereby riſque their own intereſt, as well as that of the independents, would not act at all in the appointment of a miniſter, or the regulation of the diſcipline, but left the government of the church to the pædobaptiſts."

In July 15, 1725, the minority ſettled —— Sewell for their paſtor. This was an old man, and his miniſtry unacceptable to the baptiſts, who, as might have been eaſily foreſeen, ſeparated from him ſoon after his ordination.

Sewell removed to a congregation at Stanſtead in Eſſex, when the baptiſts hiring a barn called Millar's barn in St. Andrew's Pariſh, fitted it up in the ſpring of the year 1726. It was licenſed on April the eighth, and on the ſixteenth it was preached in for the firſt time. Huſſey's church was thus in the courſe of ſix years divided into four parts. Robinſon here forms an apology for this ſeparating conduct of his diſſenting brethren, and triumphs over the dull uniformity of the eſtabliſhed church.

After Sewell's departure from Cambridge, the

the two meetings, the Stoneyard, and Millar's barn, agreed to unite, and moved to Stoneyard, November 9, 1727. After agitating the old queſtion of ſtrict and mixed communion, they ſettled on the mixed plan, and appointed Andrew Harper their miniſter, a perſon no ways eminent either for talents, or learning, but one beloved by his people when living, and remembered with gratitude when dead. He was ſucceeded by George Simpſon M. A. 1745. Robinſon gives a curious account of this man. "He was, ſays he, a North Briton, educated at Aberdeen, where he took his maſter of arts degree, a compleat ſcholar, a good preacher, a thorough proteſtant diſſenter, a rigid baptiſt of a violent temper, a lord in his church, a tyrant in his family, and a libertine in his life." Robinſon thus continues his narrative "The church, diſunited in their tempers, diſpirited in their proſpects, and low in their circumſtances, jangled awhile, and then broke up; the doors were ſhut and the people diſperſed."

So low was the ſtate of things among the diſſenters at Cambridge, when a few members of the former church aſſembling, and reproducing their written religious agreement, which Robinſon calls, renewing covenant, thought of making one more effort, to procure a ſettled miniſter!

Thoſe

Thoſe readers who are accuſtomed to conſider the art of preaching, merely as the art of getting a livelihood, will conſider the invitation of theſe wrangling diſſenters, as a bold and unwarranted meaſure: the members were only thirty four, moſt of them poor villagers who could only raiſe 3l. 12s. 5d. per quarter: this circumſtance is mentioned not merely to enhance the ſelf-denial of Robinſon: for events conſpired to render his ſituation at Norwich unpleaſant. His relations had become his enemies. His religion was the ſource of their averſion; he had been deprived, as he expreſſes himſelf, of his maternal fortune; his intention of marriage rendered it expedient, that he ſhould look out for a ſettlement; and his penetration was too quick, not to perceive, that to one, who wiſhed not only to propagate his favourite opinions, but to advance in intellectual improvement, Cambridge, though at preſent an unfruitful ſoil, might, by induſtry and a dexterous management of local advantages, be rendered productive. At the ſame time he had as great ſelf-denial and as much benevolence as moſt men.

We have already obſerved, that he became the ſtated paſtor at Cambridge in 1761. When the miniſter ſettles, it is the general practice with thoſe churches that call themſelves orthodox,

dox, to receive a confeſſion of faith from their intended paſtor. Robinſon, accordingly, drew up his confeſſion which embraced the ſeveral articles, that may be ſeen in the Appendix *. Robinſon, after reading his creed to the church, obſerved, that " theſe appeared ſcriptural truths; that where any of them ſurpaſſed his comprehenſion, his reaſon did homage to revelation: that in this there was nothing done but what a naturaliſt did every time he ſtudied a daiſy: that he intended, however, in his future miniſtry, to dwell on the leaſt diſputable, as they were the moſt eſſential, truths of religion."

The account, which he gives of his ſettling with his congregation is ſo modeſt, that an extract cannot but be agreeable. " The ſettlement of Robinſon ſeems rather a romantic, than a rational undertaking. For this paſtor was to be maintained. He had not received above ten guineas from his own family for ſome years: he had no future proſpect of receiving any: his grandfather had cut him off with a legacy of half a guinea. He had received only an hundred pounds with his wife, and this he had diminiſhed among the methodiſts. He had never enquired what this con-

* See Appendix, No. I.

gregation

gregation would allow him, nor had any body propoſed any thing. They had paid him, for the firſt half year, 3l. 12s. 5d. they had increaſed ſince, but not enough to maintain him frugally; there was no proſpect of ſo poor a people ſupplying him long, eſpecially ſhould his family increaſe, which it was likely to do. Beſides, the congregation, through the libertiniſm of many of its former members, had acquired a bad character. Theſe would have been inſurmountable difficulties to an older and a wiſer man: but he was a boy, and the love of his flock was a million to him. His ſettlement, therefore, on this article ſhould be no future precedent for future ſettlements." In a note he adds, "the ſupport of this church, has always been by a quarterly voluntary ſubſcription paid to the deacons. During the firſt years of his miniſtry the annual income kept increaſing from the ſmall beginning mentioned to 25, 30, 35, 40, 50l. in ſucceeding years; and about the year 1770, it amounted to upwards of 90l. ſince that year it has decreaſed, and of late increaſed again. The perpetual changes of the ſubſcribers by deaths, removals, &c. have always rendered the income ſo variable, that it has never been two years together the ſame."

Robinſon's creed was the confeſſion of a youth,

youth, no proper ſubject for criticiſm: ſuffice it, that he believed it true at the time. He enlarged afterwards on each of the articles contained in it, in an Eſſay on Moderate Calviniſm, that is ſtill in poſſeſſion of the family. I have juſt glanced my eye over this eſſay; it diſcovers conſiderable ingenuity, and no ſmall ſhare of learning. An hiſtorical and critical examination of the ſeveral articles of Calviniſm has been made in my Inquiry into the Nature of Subſcription to the Thirty-nine Articles*. Concerning them I ſay nothing here.

* Third part, ſecond edition.

CHAPTER IV.

From his Settling at Hauxton, in Cambridgeſhire, to a Public Adminiſtration of Baptiſm, at Wittlesford.

HE ſoon quitted his friends at Fulbourn, and went to live at Hauxton, an obſcure little village a few miles from Cambridge, near the London road. His cottage was ſmall, his income ſlender; his family ſoon became numerous *. His literary purſuits alſo rendered a few books neceſſary. His mode of living was, therefore, neceſſarily ſimple, correſponding to his narrow circumſtances. In this humble ſituation he lived ſeveral years.

How Robinſon could indeed ſupport himſelf at this time, may to ſome appear a matter of ſurpriſe: and it is evident he muſt have received occaſional civilities from friends, of which one or two inſtances are found in his papers. The following letter is inſerted, not merely as explaining this matter, but from reſpect to the memory of an old and eſteemed friend of our author's.

* Before he left Hauxton he had nine children to ſupport, beſides a wife, and aged mother. One child died here in infancy. In all he had twelve.

DEAR

DEAR SIR,

Herewith I ſend you the money and pamphlets, value four pounds: the copy bound is for yourſelf, if there is room on your ſhelf. The account of your own, and your people's condition gives me much pleaſure: may the Lord continue you humble and uſeful, and ſettle it in your heart to perſevere, labouring in that part of his vineyard he hath placed you in, that many may be your crown and joy in the day of his appearance! You know of my acquaintance coming to town, and as you have the opportunity, ſhould be glad they would extend your intelligence to my advantage, that our knowledge may be mutual. Return my Chriſtian reſpects to the perſon you mentioned. We join in remembrance of Mrs. Robinſon, and, be aſſured, I am in expectation of your frequent thoughts of me at the throne of grace, with hearty prayers for you,

Dear Sir, Your real Friend, &c.

BENJAMIN WALLIN.

Benjamin Wallin was the paſtor of a congregation at Maze Pond, in Southwark, a man of great worth, author of various theological public-tions, a particular friend of Robinſon in the early part of life.

The advantages attendant on obſcurity, no one better underſtood to improve than Robinſon. Poſſeſſed of gentle manners, and a tender heart, of a modeſt demeanor, and a teachable diſpoſition, he became the idol of the poor, and gained the eſteem of all. The following lines, extracted from one of the moſt beautiful poems in our language *, and written by a moſt benevolent man, have been ſo frequently quoted, as to appear almoſt trite: but returned ſo ſtrongly to my memory on a late excurſion to his modeſt dwelling at Hauxton, and exhibit ſo true a picture of Robinſon, that I could almoſt perſuade myſelf, that Dr. Goldſmith's good clergyman was no other than that amiable man.

Near yonder copſe, where once the garden ſmil'd,
And ſtill where many a garden flower grows wild,
There where a few torn ſhrubs the place diſcloſe,
The village preacher's modeſt manſion roſe.
A man he was to all the country dear;
And paſſing rich with forty pounds a year.
Remote from towns he ran his godly race,
Nor e'er had changed, or wiſhed to change his place.
Unſkilful he to fawn, or ſeek for power,
By doctrines faſhioned to the varying hour:
Far other aims his heart had learn'd to prize,
More bent to raiſe the wretched than to riſe:
His houſe was known to all the vagrant train;
He chid their wand'rings, but reliev'd their pain:

* The Deſerted Village, by Dr. Goldſmith.

The

The long remember'd beggar was his gueſt,
Whoſe beard deſcending ſwept his aged breaſt;
The ruin'd ſpendthrift, now no longer proud,
Claim'd kindred there, and had his claims allow'd;
The broken ſoldier, kindly bade to ſtay,
Sat by his fire and talk'd the night away:
Wept o'er his wounds, or tales of ſorrow done,
Shoulder'd his crutch and ſhew'd how fields were won:
Pleaſed with his gueſts, the good man learn'd to glow,
And quite forgot their vices in their woe.
Careleſs their merits or defects to ſcan,
His pity gave ere charity began.
Thus to releaſe the wretched was his pride,
And even his failings leaned to virtue's ſide.

In this agreeable ſolitude two purſuits, beſides a regard to his family, engroſſed his attention,—the raiſing of a congregation, and the advancement of his ſtudies. For the former, Who, by native ſweetneſs, by early aſſociations, by ſettled habits, could be better fitted? He had little occaſion to learn, what ſome preachers never underſtand, at leaſt never practiſe, the art of ſtooping to the poor; and it was unneceſſary for him to ſtudy the art of climbing in the church. His manners were unvarniſhed by the frivolities of a polite education; his heart uninflated by the tumours of falſe greatneſs. Unacquainted with the faſhionable world, he yet knew mankind; experiments on himſelf had given him an extraordinary inſight in-

to the human character, and into the ſprings of human conduct. With ſimplicity of manners, he united a little profeſſional cant: the latter he could practiſe, on occaſion, as well as moſt men: but the features moſt ſtrongly expreſſed on his countenance were thoſe of genius and benevolence: theſe marked him for a ſuperior man. He poſſeſſed in an high degree what charms diſcerning perſons of whatever rank and condition,—" that politeneſs, which, as ſome one prettily expreſſes it, is an happy mixture of greatneſs and benignity, the ſun-ſhine from the ſoul on our words and actions."

Robinſon did not qualify, that is, take the oaths, which diſſenting miniſters are obliged to take, if they wiſh to enjoy the benefits of the act of uniformity, till October, 1775. To occaſional inſtances of rudeneſs he had ſometimes been expoſed, through his ſituation near an univerſity: prudence, therefore, inſtructed him to avail himſelf of legal ſecurity, having been aſſured, that, by omitting it, he would expoſe himſelf to further inconvenience: accordingly, he went to the ſeſſions-houſe, and took the uſual oaths. In 1774, he obſerves, that had he ſeen things in the light he did then, he would have run every hazard, rather than have qualified in that manner.

He

He now uſed to come regularly to Cambridge on the firſt day of the week with his family, and to preach twice, ſometimes, three times. In the middle of the week he delivered lectures in the neighbouring villages, ſometimes, morning, as well as evening, except in hay and harveſt-times: the catechiſing of children, alſo, was a favourite employment. The following places were occaſionally ſupplied with lectures by him during this period: Dry Drayton, Duxford, Foulmire, Foxton, Fulbourn, Granchefter, Harſton, Haſlingfield, Hauxton, Ickleton, Sawſton, Stapleford, Fen-Stanton, Swaveſey, Whittlesford, and Wickham-Brook, in Suffolk.

In village teaching he was encouraged and aſſiſted by John Berridge, a methodiſt clergyman*. This ſingular man was vicar of Everton in Bedfordſhire; in his habits and manners much reſembling old biſhop Latimer†; having

* Berridge, at the outſet of his religious courſe, publiſhed a pamphlet, which gave occaſion to two ſmall publications of biſhop Green's, entitled, "The Principles and Practice of the Methodiſts."

Berridge publiſhed ſome years after a ſingular book, entitled, "The Chriſtian World Unmaſked, Pray come and peep."

† See a Letter from Berridge to the counteſs of Huntingdon, publiſhed in 1794, compared with Gilpin's Life of Latimer.

been ſenior fellow of Clare-hall, and moderator in the public ſchools, being a man of conſiderable learning, and condeſcenſion, as well as a great humouriſt, he had obtained extenſive eſteem and reſpect: but oppreſſed with weak nerves and an occaſional melancholy, he found repoſe in a religion of a moſt peculiar caſt. Human wiſdom he thought might, ſometimes, be made uſeful, but was more often injurious to a child of grace. He called himſelf a "Riding Pedlar," becauſe his maſter, as he uſed to expreſs himſelf, employed him to ſerve near forty ſhops in the country, beſides his own pariſh.

Among the methodiſts of his day he became eminent: his talents and learning gave him conſideration; his reveries did but increaſe his popularity; but, what forms the worth of his character, he was an honeſt man. He had too much the tone of a reformer to be endured in the univerſity, and was now ſettled on a ſmall college living.

The laſt time I viſited this religious humouriſt at Everton, "Ah! ſaid he, when Mr. Robinſon lived at Hauxton, he was a modeſt, teachable, and benevolent young man: but he poſſeſſed abilities, and grew vain; I thought him a moſt gracious preacher, but he has forſaken

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the Lord."—Robinſon highly valued this old man; but uſed to ſay, "I know how to eſtimate his good qualities, without making myſelf a ſimpleton."—Berridge died January 22, 1793. The following epitaph, inſcribed on his tomb-ſtone, was written by himſelf:

Here lie
The earthly remains of
JOHN BERRIDGE,
Late vicar of Everton,
And an itinerant ſervant of Jeſus Chriſt,
Who loved his maſter, and his work;
And after running on his errands many years,
Was caught up to wait on him above.
Reader!
Art thou born again?
[No ſalvation without a new birth]
I was born in ſin February 1716;
Remained ignorant of my fallen ſtate till 1730;
Lived proudly on faith and works for ſalvation till 1754;
Admitted to Everton vicarage, 1755;
Fled to Jeſus for refuge, 1756;
Fell aſleep in Chriſt, January 22, 1793.

Robinſon's occaſional labours alſo were ſometimes lightened by the expoſitory lectures of ſeveral under graduates, particularly Rowland Hill, now preacher at Surrey-ſtreet chapel; Charles De Coetlogon, now miniſter of the Lock chapel, author of various theological publications; Thomas Pentycroſs, rector of Wallingford, Berkſhire, author of a volume of

ſermons, and others; all of whom afterwards ſettled in the national church.

His literary labours during his continuance at Hauxton muſt have been equal to his miniſterial. Here he wrote the Eſſay already alluded to, which diſcovers conſiderable reading; and, Arcana, or the Principles of the Petitioners for relief from Subſcription to the thirty-nine Articles: here alſo he formed the deſign of tranſlating Saurin's ſermons, and printed one or two as ſpecimens.

In one quality he excelled moſt men: to the moſt trifling connections he could give a degree of conſequence, and from the moſt untoward ſituation he could derive improvement: he knew how to convey ideas to the moſt ſimple minds, and from the moſt unpromiſing acquaintance he could receive advantage. The faſtidiouſneſs of oſtentatious egotiſts, who can reap no inſtruction but from men of letters, as well as the inſolence of ambitious triflers, who only pay homage to the great, he treated with the poignancy of ridicule, rather than the bitterneſs of contempt. Towards the poor his manners ſhewed a diſpoſition as characteriſtic of genius as goodneſs. For, Is not rational man the object of the philoſopher's ſtudy? And may not moral good be collected from every rank?

rank? Robinſon was improving his intellectual powers, and advancing in knowledge, when talking with a day labourer, or rocking the cradle, no leſs than when ſtudying Latin and Greek, or tranſlating Saurin. But did he deſpiſe letters? Was he one of thoſe religious ſoftlings, to borrow a word often made uſe of by himſelf, that inſult men of literature? No. He cultivated the friendſhip of ſuch men, and prompted them to diſcourſe on their favourite ſtudies. His ſimple and modeſt deportment, his inquiſitive and teachable diſpoſition, encouraged them to open their treaſures; and while they were delighted by the charms of his converſe, he was enriching himſelf with their diſcoveries. He might truly ſay, with Horace,

——— Ego apis Matinæ
More modoque
Grata carpentis thyma per laborem
Plurimum. CARMIN. L. iv. Od. ii.

As the ſmall mountain bees collect
With daily toil the grateful thyme;
Thus I more weighty truths ſelect,
Or crop the flowery ſweets of rhyme. D.

Among his papers nothing is found like a regular correſpondence at this time, though one or two letters on unimportant ſubjects ſeem to intimate, that he had ſeveral correſpondents. A ſmall

ſmall aſſortment of letters from Whitfield and Thornton carries moſt of this appearance. By a note from Robinſon's valued friend William Naſh of Royſton, in Cambridgeſhire, it appears, that Whitfield intended to be at Cambridge the fifth of that month. Thornton was a Ruſſia merchant, well known among the ſerious people of thoſe times, (ſo the methodiſts called themſelves) for his liberality to poor miniſters. Thornton's letters relate to favours and letters received from Robinſon, and donations ſent to him either for his own uſe, or to be diſtributed among the poor. The favours received were, moſt probably, of a ſpiritual nature. Whitfield's are ſhort letters, deſcribing his own religious campaigns, or holding out encouragement to his young fellow ſoldier. They exhibit, what all Whitfield's works exhibit, the character of a man poſſeſſing few ideas, but of extraordinary energy of character, and of an honeſt heart.

Robinſon for ſeveral years baptiſed publicly at Whittlesford, in the river, agreeably to the practice of many of the baptiſts. In the year 1767, a public baptiſm was adminiſtered amidſt a great number of ſpectators near the river, in a yard adjoining to the houſe of Ebenezer Hollick, a wealthy and reſpectable member of his ſociety.

It

It is hoped, that the following account of this ceremony will not be reckoned an improper digreſſion, when it is recollected, that Robinſon was himſelf a baptiſt, and that the deſcription may afford amuſement, if not inſtruction, to ſuch readers, whoſe inquiries have not been directed this way. It is extracted from the Hiſtory of Baptiſm, a favourite work of our author's, a more full account of which will be given in its proper place*.

The Adminiſtration of Baptiſm by the Engliſh Baptiſts.

"Not many years ago at Whittlesford, ſeven miles from Cambridge, forty-eight perſons were baptiſed in that ford of the river, from which the village takes it's name. At ten o'clock of a very fine morning in May, about fifteen hundred people of different ranks aſſembled together. At half paſt ten in the forenoon, the late Dr. Andrew Gifford, fellow of the ſociety of antiquarians, ſublibrarian of the Britiſh Muſeum, and teacher of a baptiſt congregation in Eagle-ſtreet, London, aſcended a moveable pulpit, in a large open court-yard, near the river, and adjoining to the houſe of the lord of the manor.

"Round him ſtood the congregation; people

* Robinſon's "Hiſtory of Baptiſm," p. 541.

on

on horſeback, in coaches, and in carts, forming the outſide ſemicircle; many perſons ſitting in rooms of the houſe, the ſaſhes being open. All were uncovered, and there was a profound ſilence. The doctor firſt gave out an hymn, which the congregation ſang. Then he prayed for all mankind in general, for the king, queen, royal family, both houſes of parliament, the judges, and all civil magiſtrates, for all ranks, and degrees of men, for the proſperity of true religion, and for a bleſſing on the preſent ſervice in particular.

" Prayer being ended, he took out a New Teſtament and read his text—" I indeed baptiſe you with water unto repentance." He obſerved, " that the force of the prepoſitions had eſcaped the notice of the tranſlators, and, that the true reading was: I, indeed baptiſe you IN water, *at*, or upon repentance; which ſenſe he confirmed by the forty-firſt verſe of the twelfth of Matthew, and other paſſages. Then he ſpoke, as moſt baptiſts do on theſe occaſions, on the four parts of his ſubject. Firſt, on the *nature* of the ordinance, that it was neither a pagan nor Jewiſh rite, but a New Teſtament inſtitute, of divine appointment: I, John, by divine commiſſion, baptiſe you. Secondly, on the *ſubject*, that it was a believer and not an infant who was incapable of performing what was requiſite

requiſite to baptiſm, faith and repentance, of whom it would be hard to require it, for whom no proxy was appointed, or could be admitted, and to whom no damage could come if he were left without baptiſm, who could do the church no good, and might do a great deal of harm: I baptiſe you, who ſtand here confeſſing your ſins. Thirdly, he obſerved the *mode*, that it was *dipping*, and not *ſprinkling*, which he endeavoured to prove by the meaning of the word baptiſe, by the places where baptiſm was adminiſtered, and by ſeveral other circumſtances: I *baptiſe* or dip you in water. Fourthly, he remarked the *end* of the ordinance, and ſhewed that it was appointed to expreſs a conſcientious belief of the miſſion of Jeſus, and the truth of the Chriſtian religion. He obſerved, that religion was religion, and nothing elſe, and ought not to be confounded with civil government, law, learning, war, trade, or any thing elſe. He cloſed by contraſting the doctrine of baptiſm with infant ſprinkling. Then the candidates for baptiſm retired to dreſs themſelves.

"About half an hour after, the adminiſtrator, who that day was a nephew of the doctor, and admirably qualified for the work, in a long black gown of fine baize, without a hat, with a ſmall New Teſtament in his hand, came down

down to the river ſide, accompanied by ſeveral baptiſt-miniſters and deacons of their churches, and the perſons to be baptiſed. The men came firſt, two and two, without hats, and dreſſed as uſual, except that, inſtead of coats, each had on a long white baize gown, tied round the waiſt with a ſaſh. Such as had no hair wore white cotton or linen caps.

" The women followed the men, two and two, all dreſſed neat, clean, and plain, and their gowns white linen or dimity. It was ſaid, that the garments had knobs of lead at bottom to make them ſink. Each had a long light ſilk cloak hanging looſely over her ſhoulders, a broad ribband tied over her gown beneath her breaſt, and an hat on her head. They all ranged themſelves round the adminiſtrator at the water-ſide. A great multitude of ſpectators ſtood on the banks of the river on both ſides; ſome had climbed and ſat on the trees, many ſat on horſeback, and in carriages, and all behaved with a decent ſerioufneſs which did honour to the good ſenſe and the good manners of the aſſembly, as well as to the free conſtitution of this country.

" Firſt, the adminiſtrator read an hymn, which the people ſang. Then he read that portion of ſcripture, that is read in the Greek church

on

on the ſame occaſion, the Hiſtory of the Baptiſm of the Eunuch, beginning at the twenty-ſixth verſe of Acts ix. and ending with the thirty-ninth. About ten minutes he ſtood expounding the verſes, and then taking one of the men by the hand, he led him into the water, ſaying, as he went, See here is water, what doth hinder? If thou believeſt with all thine heart, thou mayeſt be baptiſed. When he came to a ſufficient depth he ſtopped, and, with the utmoſt compoſure, placing himſelf on the left hand of the man, his face being toward the man's ſhoulders, he put his right-hand between his ſhoulders behind, gathering into it a little of the gown for hold: the fingers of his left-hand he thruſt under the ſaſh before, and the man putting his two thumbs into that hand, he locked all together by cloſing his hand. Then he deliberately ſaid, I baptiſe thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt, and while he uttered theſe words, ſtanding wide, he gently leaned him backward and dipped him once.

"As ſoon as he had raiſed him, a perſon in a boat, faſtened there for the purpoſe, took hold of the man's hand, wiped his face with a napkin, and led him a few ſteps to another attendant, who then gave him his arm, walked with him to the houſe, and aſſiſted him to dreſs.

There were many ſuch in waiting, who, like the primitive ſuſceptors, aſſiſted during the whole ſervice.

" The reſt of the men followed the firſt, and were baptiſed in like manner. After them the women were baptiſed. A female friend took off at the water-ſide the hat and cloak. A deacon of the church led one to the adminiſtrator and another from him; and women at the water-ſide took each as ſhe came out of the river, and conducted her to the apartment in the houſe, where they dreſſed themſelves. When all were baptiſed, the adminiſtrator, coming up out of the river, and ſtanding at the ſide, gave a ſhort exhortation on the honour and the pleaſure of obedience to the divine commands, and then, with the uſual benediction, diſmiſſed the aſſembly.

" About half an hour after, the men newly baptiſed having dreſſed themſelves went from their rooms into a large hall in the houſe, where they were preſently joined by the women, who came from their apartments to the ſame place. Then they ſent a meſſenger to the adminiſtrator, who was dreſſing in his apartment, to inform him, they waited for him. He preſently came, and firſt prayed for a few minutes, and then cloſed the whole by a ſhort diſcourſe on the

the bleſſings of civil and religious liberty, the ſufficiency of ſcripture, the pleaſure of a good conſcience, the importance of an holy life, and the proſpect of a bleſſed immortality.—This they called a public baptiſm.

"There was a private baptiſm at Cambridge, in the ſame month of May. The baptiſt-congregation there have a ſmall garden walled in, adjoining to their meeting-houſe. In the middle of this is an oval baptiſtery with ſteps at each end. The bath and the ſteps take up the whole length of the garden, and there is a parlour or veſtry at each end, ſo that, on opening the door of one room, you may either walk round the baptiſtery, or ſtep directly into it, and paſſing through it go up to the oppoſite ſteps into the oppoſite room. The baptiſtery is filled and emptied by a pump and proper pipes."

Of the nature of private baptiſms, the reader may form an opinion from what has been already ſaid; it would, therefore, be unneceſſary to dwell on further particulars.

CHAPTER V.

From the time of building the New Meeting-Houſe, to that of Robinſon's commencing Author.

A Reſpectable congregation being now collected at Cambridge, the old meeting-houſe was pulled down, and a neat building erected, at the expenſe of the congregation;—a way of erecting meeting-houſes at that time rather unuſual.

The diſſenters have been too much in the habit of raiſing buildings, and of bringing the churches in general under unreaſonable contributions to defray the expenſes. This, ſometimes, becomes a ſevere tax on diſtant congregations, and the houſes being unneceſſarily large, or too elegantly commodious, do but adminiſter to the vanity of the petitioning party. "Why," Robinſon was accuſtomed to ſay, "ſhould men run in debt by building a church, any more than by furniſhing their dwellings? If they cannot afford a meeting-houſe, why will not a barn ſuffice? If they cannot be accommodated with a barn, why will not a room in a poor cottage content them?" He uſed frequently to lament ſuch improprieties, and always mentioned the conduct of his own ſociety with particular reſpect.

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The place was purchaſed of Alderman Halſted, and the beſt mode of ſettlement was choſen, that could be thought of, to ſecure the future liberty of the people. All had a ſhare in the property of the houſe, as the writings kept by the late Michael Foſter, merchant, one of the original truſtees, teſtify. The meeting was conveyed to truſtees choſen by the people: and the church for the future is to fill up the truſt with men of their own chooſing. "The ſubſcribers and purchaſers, as well as the preſent truſt," to uſe Robinſon's words, "aimed at no dominion, and will ſubmit to no ſlavery. They did all they could to ſecure the ſame independency to their ſucceſſors, and wiſhed to inſpire them with a juſt terror of that worſt of all animals, a Lord-brother:" what kind of animal that is, diſſenting churches well underſtand.

To record the names of the truſtees will appear natural to ſuch, as are not inſenſible of favours, and of a conviction of true worth. On my joining the diſſenters at Cambridge, moſt of theſe truſtees were then living, and among the oldeſt of the members: to me moſt have ſhewn perſonal civilities; and ſuch as I was beſt acquainted with, poſſeſſed great virtues.

Their names were as follows: 1. Thomas Brown, of Sawſton, deacon, 2. John Fyſon,

of Horningſea, farmer, 3. William Dobſon, of Trumpington, ſchool-maſter, 4. Ebenezer Hollick, of Whittlesford, eſq. 5. John Gifford, of Shepreth, eſq. 6. Richard Foſter, of Cambridge, merchant, 7. Joſeph Ivatt, of Cambridge, gentleman, 8. Samuel Gifford, of Fenſtanton, farmer, 9. Richard Redman, of Stapleford, 10. Thomas Gifford, of Cambridge, carrier, and 11. William Whitby, of Everſden, grocer.

Being now provided with an agreeable meeting-houſe, and attended by a numerous audience, Robinſon was in the road to that reputation which he ſoon acquired as a ſpeaker: the decency of the building, the more genteel appearance of the congregation, and the abilities of the preacher, ſoon drew the attention of the academics: many became, from ſerious motives, regular attendants; but more, from ſuch unſteady diſpoſitions, as uſually influence young men, poſſeſſing no object of literary purſuit. To ſpeak in the language of the younger part of the univerſity, an attendance at meeting became a pleaſant lounge.

By the graduates, Robinſon had never been moleſted; but troubleſome viſitants, as we have already noticed, were experienced in many under-graduates: till, at length, all regard to decency being diſmiſſed, and the patience of the congre-

congregation exhauſted, the preacher determined to give a public check to their impertinence.

The caſe alluded to, was that of two young men, of Emanuel college, who, during the time of worſhip, diſturbed the congregation, obliging the people to diſperſe without concluding the ſervice. Complaints had been frequently made againſt ſuch improper behaviour, and the matter referred to the proctors and heads of colleges. Redreſs, though often promiſed, had never been procured. Robinſon, therefore, reſolved to obtain ſatisfaction from the offenders, or to ſeek it by law. It was propoſed by the vice-chancellor, Dr. Richardſon, maſter of Emanuel college, to impoſe ſome exerciſe on the offenders; but, of what avail could this be? Robinſon maintained, that, though college-exerciſes might be a proper correction for the violation of college-duties, they were none for an offence againſt acts of parliament. He, therefore, inſiſted that the culprits ſhould pay the fine of fifty pounds, ſettled by an act of the legiſlature, or aſk pardon in the public papers: the latter courſe was preferred, though one of the young men, on account of his general good character, was forgiven.

However differently mankind conclude con-

cerning the forms of religion, to thoſe who practiſe them they are of importance; and to offer inſults during their performance, hath always been reckoned the higheſt indecency. To ſay no more, What can be conceived more inconſiſtent with the laws of good manners? Robinſon is by no means the firſt who has taken notice, that univerſity-towns have been, of all others, the moſt guilty of ſuch improprieties. The ſame has been obſerved by the celebrated apologiſt, Robert Barclay. Of late years, indeed, the condition of the diſſenters appearing leſs diſgraceful, gentlemen can afford to treat them with better manners. But in univerſities there will always be found occaſional overflowings of loungers, and coxcombs; and the diſſenters have received inſults not long ſince in different parts of the country, though not at Cambridge. This caſe has, therefore, been brought forward not without deſign; for, where a meeting-houſe has been regiſtered in the biſhop's court, and the oaths required by law have been taken, the miniſter or congregation aggrieved is entitled to all the benefits of the act. This ſhould be underſtood by all parties; and diſſenters, circumſtanced as above, ſhould rigidly demand the protection of the laws, and all the ſtrictneſs of juſtice.

The letter, ſent by the diſſenters in St. Andrew's

drew's parish to the tutor (Dr. Farmer, now master) of Emanuel college, will to some readers, probably, be agreeable. It shall, therefore, be subjoined.

REVEREND SIR, *Cambridge Dec.* 69.

THE trustees for the meeting beg you would accept their warmest thanks for your impartial and generous conduct in regard to your two pupils. In consideration of the general character which you are pleased to give Mr. ——, they agree to omit his name in print, and persuade themselves, that you will think it as necessary to expose the other, when the following facts are attended to.

None but an atheist denies the necessity of paying a public homage to the deity; nor will any, but a man blinded with bigotry, deny mankind the liberty of doing it in that way, which appears to each most acceptable to the God he adores. This liberty all the subjects of the British empire enjoy, except the dissenters at Cambridge.

In a profligate seaport-town our dissenting brethren meet without interruption; and gentlemen of both army and navy, occasionally at

our Cambridge meeting, have bluſhed at the difference. In the moſt diſſolute parts of London, diſturbances are unknown in meeting-houſes: how mortifying the reflection! that civility, the offspring of good ſenſe, is met with in ſinks of ignorance, which is not to be obtained at a feat of literature!

A gentleman of Mr. Farmer's delicacy and piety will find it difficult to believe half we could tell him on this head. Would you imagine, ſir, that we ſcarcely ever meet without interruptions from the under-graduates; that every agreeable female in the ſociety is expoſed to the ſame inſults as in a bawdy-houſe; no pew privileged from a bold intruſion; no family, however conſiderable in fortune or credit, from inſolent affronts? Is it credible, that proſtitutes ſhould parade our aiſles in academic habits? An unforeſeen accident diſcovered the ſex of ſuch a one but a fortnight ago. Is it ſufferable, that on reproving theſe diſorders our lives ſhould be threatened? Let a veil for ever cover theſe enormities. Nothing induces us to mention them now but the deſire of convincing Mr. Farmer, that our lenity has been infamouſly abuſed, and, conſequently, that it is a duty we owe to the ſociety under our management, vigorouſly to ſupport proſecution.

To ſay nothing of our own miniſter, (a growing love to him, perhaps, makes us partial in his favor) How can we bear to ſee graduates of our own univerſities, when they occaſionally preach to us, men of learning and piety, put to the bluſh, not more confounded at the iniquity, than ſurpriſed at the novelty of ſuch behaviour? Our American brethren were not at all conciliated to Engliſh epiſcopacy, but on the contrary highly diſguſted with it, by the behaviour of the gown at our meeting: one of them proteſting "I have preached in England, Scotland, Ireland, in various parts of America, to congregations of all denominations, to polite citizens, and to naked Indians; but never did I ſee ſuch heatheniſh impiety during divine ſervice as in the Cambridge under-graduates." In vain we tell them of the learning of ſome of the members of this univerſity: in vain we proclaim the piety of others: in vain we aſſure them of the candor of all the graduates: diſturbances in devotion ſtrike ſerious minds too deeply to be eaſily forgotten.

When national diſputes run high; when religious connections form an indiſſoluble bond among diſſenters of all denominations, ſo that an offence to one is an injury to all; when men of ſenſe are aiming, if not to unite, yet to diminiſh the diſtance which a ſurplice and ſervice-

vice-book has put between men of the ſame religion; Is it prudent to counteract ſuch Chriſtian heroes? Is it politic to provoke a peaceable people?

After all, Who does all this? A ſet of lads juſt come from ſchool, who by the vigilance of the maſters might be kept, if not obedient to them, at leaſt at a diſtance from us. To the honour of the univerſity be it ſpoken, we never received an inſult from a graduate. We are too well acquainted, ſir, with your deſerved character, to imagine any apology needful for this information. Receive it, ſir, as an apology for our expoſing one of your pupils. We are ſorry it happened ſo, but the preſent circumſtances require it.

Allow us, good ſir, to aſſure you, that we ſhall ever retain the livelieſt gratitude for your extreme civility, and with profound reſpect are

Your obliged Servants."

CHAP-

CHAPTER VI.

An Account of ſome of Robinſon's Publications, more particularly his Arcana, and Tranſlation of Saurin's Sermons.

LEAVING Robinſon for a while in the quiet diſcharge of his paſtoral office, and deferring to a future opportunity any remarks on the manner in which he conducted himſelf in this department, we now propoſe taking a ſhort view of ſome of his publications.

In 1770, he printed Two Sermons, tranſlated from the French of James Saurin, proteſtant preacher at the Hague, as a ſpecimen of a larger work, tranſlations from the ſame author, which he now had in contemplation, and which he afterwards printed in five volumes 8vo.

In 1772, a Sermon was publiſhed by him on the Nature and Neceſſity of Early Piety, preached to a ſociety of young people at Willingham, Cambridgeſhire; this ſermon was printed at Cambridge, in 1770, and reprinted at Briſtol in 1777. I omit delivering my opinion concerning ſingle diſcourſes, intending to make ſome remarks hereafter on the general character of all his ſermons.

The

The performance that firſt procured him notice as a writer, was a courſe of letters to a friend, intitled, Arcana, or the firſt Principles of the late Petitioners to Parliament for Relief in matter of Subſcription. Theſe were printed in 1774.

The queſtion concerning the penal ſtatutes, and ſubſcription to articles, had been much canvaſſed for ſeveral years paſt, by men of the moſt diſtinguiſhed talents, and exhibited in the moſt public form, as well by churchmen, as diſſenters. A few particulars it may not be improper to notice.

The commmentator on the laws of England had in his celebrated performance delivered opinions*, hoſtile to liberty, and injurious to the rights of the diſſenters. Theſe opinions related to the act of toleration, penal ſtatutes, hereſy, the right of a national church, infidels, the act of union, and the teſt laws. On ſeveral paſſages in the Commentaries, Dr. Prieſtley had made ſome remarks†, to which Blackſtone replied: the cauſe was then taken up by Dr. Furneaux, a writer of diſtinguiſhed abilities ‡. The

* More particularly in vol. i. ſect. iv. vol. iv. ſect. iv.

† Remarks, &c.

‡ In a work entitled "Letters to the Honourable Mr. Juſtice

The learned commentator's poſitions were by this writer examined with much calmneſs, and confuted with great dexterity. Blackſtone himſelf, moſt probably, acknowledged the adroitneſs of this adverſary, for in a ſubſequent edition he corrected ſeveral parts of his work. Many other writers had taken up the ſame ſubject.

In the years 1772, and 1773, the diſſenters preſented petitions to the Houſe of Commons againſt ſubſcription to the thirty-nine articles, but were unſucceſsful in their application; and, what may ſeem ſtrange, their attempt was, in ſome meaſure, over-ruled by perſons of their own party.

There would be danger of wandering too far from our ſubject; otherwiſe, to one unable to diſcover ſuperior wiſdom in theſe thirty-nine articles, it might afford no inconſiderable amuſement, to diſplay the ſubject as unfolded at this time in the Houſe of Commons; for, though ſome of the members ſpake of them as barriers againſt ſcepticiſm, and as the bulwarks of Chriſtianity, from others they received a leſs reſpectable treatment: by the member, who introduced the petition, they were maintained to be

Juſtice Blackſtone, concerning his Expoſition of the Act of Toleration, and ſome Poſitions relative to Religious Liberty."

" repugnant

" repugnant to common ſenſe;" by another—" that thoſe who ſubſcribed them did it with a forced interpretation of their own: and, that none could be ſo abſurd as to do it for conſcience ſake:" others avowed them to be " palpably ridiculous," and notoriouſly falſe*.

How was this buſineſs managed in the other houſe?—As might be expected, where the intereſt of twenty-ſix conſecrated peers was conſulted: all the biſhops, except one, were decidedly, and, no doubt, very conſcientiouſly, againſt the principle of the petition. To the honour of Green, biſhop of Lincoln, let it be remembered, that he dared to ſtand alone; though he ſuffered for his ſcrupuloſity and hardihood. When a certain peer mentioned his name to the king, who has ever kept the diſſenters at an awful diſtance, and expreſſed his frequent diſapprobation of their cauſe; " Green, Green, ſaid this ſacred perſon, he ſhall never be tranſlated." Accordingly, Green never ſtirred from Lincoln.—But we have wandered.

Robinſon had occaſion to contemplate this ſubject nearer home: in 1771, Robert Tyrwhitt, then fellow of Jeſus College, a name

* See this ſubject very ſenſibly diſcuſſed in a performance entitled, A Chineſe Fragment.

juſtly

juſtly revered in the univerſity, and never to be mentioned by the friends of liberty but in terms of reſpect, had propoſed a grace for the abolition of ſubſcription at the time of taking degrees. In the ſame year, a deſign was alſo formed of making application to parliament with ſimilar views by many of the clergy. The moſt active perſon in this buſineſs was the eminent John Jebb, who had been tutor of Peter Houſe; who for conſcience ſake reſigned the rectory of Homersfield, and vicarage of Flixton, and was diſtinguiſhed at Cambridge by publiſhing a comment on thoſe parts of Newton's Principia, that relate to the ſyſtem of the world; by his zeal in promoting annual examinations; and by his Lectures on the New Teſtament, on which he publiſhed a Harmony*.

The queſtion, therefore, concerning ſubſcription was agitated in ſuch a manner, as to give it a public aſpect, in the ſchools, from the pulpit, and from the preſs. On the 27th of December 1772, Jebb preached before the univerſity from Acts xv. 10—"Now, therefore, why tempt ye God to put a yoke upon the necks of the diſciples, which neither our fathers, nor we were able to bear?"

Much

* See Dr. Diſney's Memoirs of Dr. Jebb. vol. i.—The worthy memorialiſt alſo followed the example of Dr.

Much oppoſition had been made to Jebb's plan for annual examinations, by Powell maſter of St. John's, and to the queſtion concerning ſubſcription, by Hallifax, afterwards biſhop of Glouceſter, a man who conducted this buſineſs with ſome artifice, and towards Jebb ſhewed conſiderable meanneſs. Hallifax publiſhed two ſuperficial ſermons on the ſubject: the futility of his arguments, and the flimſineſs of his compoſition were well expoſed by Blackhall, fellow of Emanuel college.

To this important controverſy, which now excited the notice of the members of the univerſity, as well as of the diſſenters, Robinſon was very attentive: and, accordingly, collecting all the old arguments in his mind, but giving a new turn to the controverſy, in 1774 he publiſhed his courſe of Letters entitled, Arcana*, on the following ſubjects. I. On Candour in Controverſy. II. On Uniformity in religion. III. On the Right of Private Judgment. IV. On Civil Magiſtracy. V. On Innovation. VI. On Orthodoxy. VII. On Perſecution. VIII. On

Dr. Jebb; he quitted the church of England, and publiſhed, "Reaſons for reſigning the Rectory of Panton, and Vicarage of Swinderby, in Lincolnſhire," in 1782.

* "Arcana, or the Principles of the late Petitioners to Parliament for Relief in the matter of Subſcription, in eight Letters to a Friend."

Sophiſtry.

Sophiſtry. Theſe letters * poſſeſs ſome peculiarities of ſpelling, and a few crude expreſſions, and conceits; but diſcover, at the ſame time, great penetration, a lively imagination, and an happy facility of ſimplifying and illuſtrating a ſubject. The queſtion is not examined with reference to doctrine, but to diſcipline,—a view of the ſubject beſt ſuited to a mind, always inquiring, and always fluctuating; to whom, at length, the lines on Johannes Scotus might be applied.

> Quæcunque humani fuerant, juriſque ſacrati,
> In dubium veniunt cuncta, vocante Scoto†.
> Still doubting, reading ſtill the ſacred law,
> Marking in human creeds the conſtant flaw.

The Arcana procured our author many valuable friends among the diſſenters; who, expreſſing their ſurpriſe at the long obſcurity of the writer, began to conſider him as a controverſialiſt of growing reputation, qualified to do credit to their principles. Dr. Furneaux always ſpake of the work, and of the author, with great reſpect. In a letter written by Daniel Turner, a reſpectable baptiſt miniſter of Abingdon in

* "Arcana," or, "The Principles of the late Petitioners to Parliament for Relief in the Matter of Subſcription, in Eight Letters to a Friend."

† Vid. Pauli Jovii Elogia Virorum doctorum. p. 16.

Berkſhire, author of various theological publications, and who will hereafter be frequently mentioned, as the invariable friend to Robinſon, are theſe words: "When I was informed, that the Arcana was written by a baptiſt miniſter, I replied, no, it cannot be: we have not one amongſt us who can write ſuch a book as the Arcana."

In 1776 was publiſhed by our author, a Sermon entitled, "A Lecture on a becoming Behaviour in Religious Aſſemblies." This diſcourſe was preached at Cambridge, January 10, 1773, occaſioned by interruption given for three or four evenings by undergraduates.

Our author next publiſhed, namely in 1775, A Diſcuſſion of the Queſtion, "Is it lawful and right for a man to marry the ſiſter of his deceaſed wife?" a ſmall treatiſe of ſeventeen pages, ſubjoined to the Appendix (containing letters from ſeveral divines and others) to the Legal Degrees of Marriage ſtated and conſidered, &c. by John Allen, barriſter at law, ſecond edition. Theſe ſtrictures were written at the requeſt of two friends, Dr. Samuel Stennett, and John Thompſon, perſons of reſpectability among the baptiſts at that time. The diſcuſſion is judicious. The ſide of the queſtion taken by Robinſon, is the affirmative; the editor's opinion of their merit may be collected from

from the following extract addreſſed to our author.

" REVEREND SIR, *Watford, Aug.* 18, 1775.

" Impreſſed with gratitude for the very great favor you have done me at the requeſt of the Reverend Dr. Stennett and Mr. Thompſon, I cannot but, in the firſt inſtance, return you my thanks for your Strictures on Affinite Marriages, which (though I abhor flattery, yet) I muſt ſay, are exceedingly ſenſible and concluſive in favor of ſuch alliances.

" I muſt not conclude without adding, that I have lately had an opportunity of laying Fry's and Allen's book, with ſeveral of the letters I have mentioned, before the right honourable lord Hyde, chancellor of the duchy of Lancaſter, who has entered deep into the ſubject, and who has been pleaſed to ſay, that he is very clear, that there is not the leaſt degree of moral turpitude in ſuch alliances, and, that, if it is brought into the houſe, he will vote for it. His lordſhip has ſince had a viſit from ſome of the heads of the houſes of your univerſity, to whom he mentioned the ſubject, who declared their ſentiments to be the ſame with his lordſhip's, and, that they wiſhed ſuch relief might be granted. Since when I received a letter from Mr. J. Harris, who is member

for Chriſt-Church Surry, and, I think, ſecretary to the queen: he ſays the ſame in a letter he has honored me with, and adds, that ſuch alliances in many caſes are productive of much good. He is a gentleman well-known in the learned world.

" I have alſo received the ſentiments of two of the biſhops who have promiſed to vote in favor of it, and in particular the biſhop of London, who is alſo for it, and the biſhop of Lincoln, who is very ſtrongly for it, and has promiſed, if it is brought into the houſe, his vote, and all his ſupport and intereſt, and added, that ſuch is the reaſonableneſs of the affair, that he apprehends there will not be much oppoſition to it in the houſe."

It is now time to conſider the celebrated Saurin's Sermons, two of which, tranſlated by our author, were publiſhed in 1770; and in 1775, an entire firſt volume appeared: the other three volumes followed afterwards, the laſt in 1782. In 1784 a new edition of the four volumes was printed for Lepard in Newgate ſtreet, with an additional volume, and a diſſertation by Monſieur Dumont on the madneſs of David *. To

* Saurin publiſhed in all twelve volumes of ſermons and other works, the moſt conſiderable of which is entitled Diſcourſes,

To Saurin Robinſon was much indebted as well for his great facility of compoſition, and eaſe of delivery, as that brilliancy of ſentiment which ſo eminently diſtinguiſhed him as a preacher. It may not, therefore, be improper to obſerve, that James Saurin was a French refugee, who, with a great number of his countrymen, retired into Holland from the perſecutions of France and became a popular preacher at the Hague. In this beautiful village, the ſtates-general, ambaſſadors and envoys of foreign courts, a great number of nobility, gentry, and of French refugees, had their reſidence. Here alſo was a ſpacious palace belonging to

Diſcourſes, Hiſtorical, Critical, and Moral, on the moſt Memorable Events of the Old and New Teſtaments. In a MS. volume on Jewiſh Antiquities of the late learned Philip Doddridge's, which I have ſeen at Northampton, Doddridge ſpeaks of Saurin as uniting in himſelf the ſeveral qualities of the ſcholar, the gentleman, and the divine, and as one of the moſt diſtinguiſhed of mankind. That Saurin poſſeſſed brilliant talents, conſiderable learning, and very commanding powers of eloquence, ſhall be admitted: but do not his ſermons diſplay, frequently, an air of literary oſtentation? Are not his reaſonings, ſometimes, too metaphyſical for a public aſſembly, and yet his diſcourſes, not ſeldom, too flaſhy and declamatory for a profound reaſoner? His acquaintance with ſubjects of Chriſtian theology was certainly extenſive: but with reſpect to the Chriſtian Scriptures, his critical knowledge ſeems to have been inaccurate, and his judgement of men and ſpeculative opinions will be deemed by many erroneous.

the princes of Orange, the chapel of which was aſſigned to the refugees for a place of worſhip; Saurin was appointed the paſtor. His doctrine was that of Calvin; his church government preſbyterian. The agreeable peculiarities of the place, and the diſtreſſing circumſtances of the refugees, conſpired to call forth the beſt exertions of this ingenious man.

The following extract from one of Saurin's ſermons will afford a ſpecimen of his ſtyle, and of the abilities of the tranſlator. The author is ſpeaking of religious people, who, in times of public calamities, can indulge themſelves in ſhameful gratifications. "The people of whom we ſpeak, theſe pious people, theſe people who love their ſalvation, theſe people who pretend to the glory of being propoſed for examples, can, in times of the deepeſt diſtreſs, when the church is bathed in tears, while the arm of God is cruſhing our brethren and allies, when the ſame terrible arm is lifted over us; when we are threatened with extreme miſeries, when the ſcourges of God are at our gates, when there needs only the arrival of one ſhip, the blowing of one wind, the wafting of one blaſt, to convey peſtilence and plague into our country; theſe people can . . . . O God, open their eyes that they may ſee."

Prefixed

Prefixed to these volumes of translated sermons, are dissertations, much admired by most denominations of believers. The Memoirs of the Reformation in France, and the Life of the Reverend James Saurin, display that dignity of sentiment, and command of language, which are the characteristic excellences of historic composition, and prove, that, if Robinson's mind had been less occupied, and distracted by multifarious pursuits, and if his attention had been confined to this species of writing, he might have obtained one of the first places among English historians: and in one branch of ecclesiastical history he may challenge the very first: of which more hereafter. The small picture of the reign of Lewis the Fourteenth, one of the most eventful æras in the French history, and the horrors attending the revocation of the edict of Nantz, are painted in strong colours; our author's concluding remark is important,— "Lewis the Fourteenth was on the pinnacle of glory at the conclusion of the peace of Nimeguen; his dominion was, as it were, established over all Europe, and was become an inevitable prejudice to neighbouring nations, but here he began to extirpate heresy, and here he began to fall, nor has the nation ever recovered its grandeur since."

The history of France exhibits the monster

deſpotiſm in its full growth, and in its moſt enfeebled condition; it unfolds a truth which the tyrants of Europe wiſh unknown, that governments which through wantonneſs of power are the moſt violent and oppreſſive, are, when attacked, the moſt helpleſs and inſufficient. France, during her ſtruggles in the late revolution, has, in a manner, converted theſe truths into axioms.—But to return.

Men of talents, particularly if their diſpoſitions are benevolent, or their circumſtances neceſſitous, frequently become the tools of frivolous and ſuperficial characters.

Saurin's Sermons, from the originality of their ſentiment, and the ſplendor of their diction, as well as from their being little known to Engliſh readers, have rendered eſſential ſervice, as well to court, as to popular preachers. The tranſlator of Saurin, likewiſe, poſſeſſing brilliant abilities, having long followed the turn and humours of theological controverſy, commanding a flowing language, unincumbered with preferment, having alſo a numerous family, and being an eaſy good-natured man, could have rendered important aſſiſtance to divines: many compliments were, therefore, paid him by ſome of theſe men, "for his elegant and uſeful tranſlation," and liberal propoſals were made him for

for original compoſitions, or for tranſlations of Saurin, not yet preſented to the public. Five guineas a ſermon were offered him by an Iriſh dignitary, and other propoſals were ſubmitted to his conſideration by an Engliſh prebendary. Inſtances might be produced of a modern right reverend perſon, ſtrongly ſoliciting the favour of a ſermon, and of a very orthodox divine foreſtalling a part of Saurin's Tranſlation, confidentially entruſted to him; which he inſerted in a publication of his own. Theſe circumſtances, unimportant in themſelves, are mentioned, merely to repreſent the high opinion that was now entertained of Robinſon.

Whether the ſermon ſo importunately requeſted by Beadon, biſhop of Glouceſter, was for his own uſe, or for the ſervice of a friend, it is unneceſſary to inquire: or whether for one divine to preach another divine's ſermon be conſiſtent with the dignity of the ſacred character, or an affair of perfect indifference, is not worthy of a ſerious diſcuſſion. Robinſon always ſpake of this man, as a perſon of amiable manners, and of liberal ſentiments: he knew him to be determined on preferment, but thought him "too enlightened to be a biſhop." On hearing of his advancement to a mitre, he archly remarked, "He is no fitter to be a biſhop, than I am."

Robinſon

Robinſon had been applied to by many a younker in the Univerſity, as he expreſſes himſelf, for occaſional ſermons; but with their requeſts he never complied; the courtly addreſs, and the elegant ſolicitation of a dignitary he could not ſo eaſily reſiſt. Among his papers are found one or two ſermons, compoſed for a dignified perſon, of far too accommodating a character for one of his nonconformiſtical habits. But, though poor, he was ſcrupulous, and made few compliances of this kind. How far, indeed, it was conſiſtent with the rigid principles of a diſſenter to compoſe ſermons to be preached in the epiſcopal church, became, at length, an affair of conſcience with him; and to come to a final determination he took the advice of ſeveral reverend caſuiſts of his own denomination.

In the following extract of a letter from his worthy friend, Dr. Evans, late preſident of the Briſtol academy, there is ſomething humourous and diverting. "But, ſeriouſly, I ſee no harm in the world, in your making conſecration ſermons, if you can get any one to preach them: if our parſons here would but preach what I could compoſe for them, I would work night and day, but I would ſerve them with better huſks, than they feed their flocks with now. —But "the proſtitution of the word of God!" —"Wherein

—" Wherein if you make an honeſt ſcriptural ſermon? If, indeed, you trim, and turn high-churchman, you will be criminal indeed.

> " What ſaid my brave Ferdinando?
> Can a man do more than he can do?"

If he cannot ſtorm the fortreſs of hierarchy, let him ſap it: if he cannot overthrow it, let him undermine it: in other words, if he cannot openly preach in their cathedrals againſt it, in propriâ perſonâ, let him do it by proxy. I ſee no harm in promoting the advancement of one of low principles: you may be the means of promoting a young Laud; and as I think, none of us ſhould ſcruple to preach a viſitation or conſecration ſermon, would the biſhops permit us, I ſee no reaſon why we ſhould ſcruple to make one to be preached; after all, you muſt judge."

This ſubject muſt not be diſmiſſed without an obſervation on Robinſon's ſentiments at this period.—Saurin's divinity was ſtrictly orthodox, according to the ſenſe of the French proteſtants; that is, it embraced a Trinity of divine perſons in the Godhead, the doctrines of abſolute predeſtination, and final perſeverance, as explained by Calvin, and the preſbyterian form of church-government. His opinions concerning rites, diſcipline, and miniſters, poſſeſs

poſſeſs all the ſolemnity of orthodoxy, and all the preciſion of ſyſtem.

The tranſlator, alſo, was unqueſtionably a ſincere doctrinal Calviniſt, when he firſt undertook to give an Engliſh dreſs to his favourite preacher. But in the year 1784, when he printed the fifth volume of Saurin, he enters a proteſt againſt any haſty concluſions concerning his own ſentiments; and, indeed, he profeſſes not to believe all the opinions delivered in thoſe volumes. The avowed difference, it is true, relates merely to rites, to diſcipline, and to miniſters: but, whether his real perſuaſions, or ſecret doubts, might not regard more important doctrines, it would be hazardous either to aſſert, or to deny. When people profeſs their belief in ſyſtems, whether philoſophical, metaphyſical, political, or theological, where acknowledged errors are concealed among acknowledged truths, it is fair to aſk them, What part of the ſyſtem do you mean? It is no uncommon thing for men, to conceal their diſapprobation of public ſyſtems by an open declaration againſt their leſs important parts. How far this might be the caſe with our author, as low down as the year 1784, the readers are left to determine.—But Calvin himſelf was dexterous * in

* Vid. Calvini Inſtitut. l. i. c. xiv. ſ. 1.

finding

finding ingenious expedients, to ſolve theological difficulties. The preceding are the only publications of our author's, to be noticed in this ſtage of his hiſtory.

It may not, however, be improper to obſerve, that, in the years 1773, 1774, and 1775, he beſtowed a very particular attention on the hiſtory of the nonconformiſts, or of thoſe miniſters of the church of England, who were ejected from their livings, or ſilenced by the Act of Uniformity. It appears from papers communicated to his eſteemed friend, Samuel Palmer, of Hackney, editor of that moſt valuable performance, the Nonconformiſts' Memorial*, that this work was much indebted

* The complete title of this work is as follows: "The Nonconformiſts' Memorial, being an Account of the Miniſters, who were Ejected or Silenced after the Reſtoration; particularly by the Act of Uniformity, which took place on Bartholomew-day Auguſt 24, 1662: containing a conciſe View of their Lives and Characters, their Principles, Sufferings, and Printed Works, originally written by the Reverend and Learned Benjamin Calamy, D. D. Now Abridged and Corrected, and the Author's Additions inſerted, with many further particulars, and new Anecdotes, by Samuel Palmer: to which is Prefixed an Introduction containing a brief Hiſtory of the Times in which they lived, and the Grounds of their Nonconformity."—Among the perſons to whom this work is indebted, Samuel Palmer ſpeaks of our Author as follows: "the Reverend

indebted to Robinſon. Numerous inaccuracies were pointed out by him in all the volumes of the original work, and much intereſting and new information was communicated to the laſt edition. Theſe are inſerted in their reſpective places, and proper acknowledgements made to Robinſon.

Indeed, the intereſting part, taken by our author, in the hiſtory of the Nonconformiſts, his reſidence near an Univerſity, which afforded him a ready acceſs to books little known; his acquaintance with college regiſters, (for he and Robotham, a diſſenting miniſter of Cambridge, examined with great attention every particular book of each college) rendered him a kind of nonconformiſts' repoſitory. The Diſſenters' Church-book alluded to, p. 35, of theſe Memoirs, written, as before mentioned, by Robinſon in 1774, if publiſhed, would make an entertaining little performance.

Reverend Mr. Robinſon of Cambridge, who has with great care examined the Regiſters of Inductions to livings in Cambridgeſhire, and communicated many valuable corrections and additions." This writer is author of other publications, one of which, The Proteſtant Diſſenters' Catechiſm, is more particularly intereſting to all diſſenters.

CHAP-

CHAPTER VII.

An Account of various Schemes of Benevolence.

OUR author now lived at Cheſterton, a village about two miles from Cambridge. He removed there in June 1773, to an houſe, the property of Richard Roſe, a minor.

It would be no leſs agreeable, than inſtructive, to ſurvey his rural economy, and domeſtic arrangements in this new ſituation: the verſatility of his genius was uncommon: and whether he was making a bargain, repairing an houſe, ſtocking a farm, giving directions to workmen, or aſſiſting their labours, he was the ſame invariable man, diſplaying no leſs vigour in the execution of his plans, than ingenuity in their contrivance. The readineſs with which he paſſed from literary purſuits to rural occupations, from rural occupations to domeſtic engagements, from domeſtic engagements to the forming of plans for diſſenting miniſters, to the ſettling of churches, to the ſolving of caſes of conſcience, to the removing of the difficulties of ignorant, or the ſoftening of the aſperities of quarrelſome brethren, was ſurpriſing.

His

His character, as a farmer, ſhall be conſidered at a future opportunity: it is here intended to contemplate him, as a philanthropiſt.

Of his ſchemes of benevolence many are ingenious, others eccentric, and ſome uſeful. More theories were formed by him, than he could reduce to practice; and many, it is probable, only ſtruggled, as it were, for birth, and were never produced even on paper.

Thoſe, of which any traces are left may be divided into three claſſes: 1. ſuch as relate to churches; 2. ſuch as relate to literature; 3. ſuch as relate to mere humanity. The delineation of his character as a preacher ſhall be deferred to that period, when my acquaintance with him commenced. This ſeems the proper place to ſurvey thoſe labours of love, which he always conſidered an eſſential part of a miniſter's duty.

Indeed, though he could never have gained that eminent rank as a public ſpeaker, without much previous labour, yet, by a regular courſe of reading, and by a ſober continuity of reflection, he had ſtored his mind with ſuch a rich variety of ideas, and, by the habit of addreſſing public aſſemblies, had acquired ſuch a facility of communicating them, that he ever conſidered

conſidered preaching, in the popular acceptation of the word, as the eaſieſt part of a miniſter's duty. Accordingly, our teacher devoted a conſiderable portion of his time to ſuch regulations, as regard the economy of churches, and are more particularly intereſting to diſſenting congregations. It ſhould be added, that he knew how to govern ſuch aſſemblies as well as moſt men, though the mode adopted by him, few have practiſed with equal ſucceſs.

During an early period of his miniſtry at Cambridge, he drew up a paſtoral letter that may be ſeen in the Appendix *, and no apology will be neceſſary for its inſertion. Various treatiſes have been written by him on church-government, and few men have handled this ſubject with equal dexterity: a ſubject, fertile with violent claims, and humiliating conceſſions, ſolemn altercations, and bitter animoſities. From the ancient, ridiculous, and probably, ſpurious writings of "the apoſtolical fathers†," as well as from the Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory of Euſebius, may be gathered, how very

* No. II.

† See more particularly the Epiſtles aſcribed to Ignatius and Clement. Even the firſt epiſtle of the latter, and for the authenticity of the former no one in theſe times contends, betrays the character of a ſpiritual governor.

ſoon Chriſtians over-awed the reaſon, and enſlaved the conſciences of mankind; and ſubſequent ages have proved, that the courſe of church power is not retrograde.

——— Malum, quo non aliud velocius ullum,
Mobilitate viget, viresque acquirit eundo:
Parva metu primo, mox ſeſe attollit in auras;
Ingrediturque ſolo, et caput inter nubila condit.
VIRGIL. ÆNEID. l. 4. v. 174.

No ſwifter ill, or more replete with woes:
Vigorous ſhe moves, and ſtrengthens as ſhe goes:
Firſt ſmall through fear, ſhe ſoon dilates her ſize,
And tempts, with giant ſtrides, the diſtant ſkies. D.

Our author's unſophiſticated ſentiments on this ſubject, written at a very early period of his miniſtry, may be ſeen by the hints in the Appendix. They prove, that, in his eſtimation, church diſcipline ſhould be an arrangement of wiſe maxims, and of benevolent regulations, as well to relieve the wants, as to promote the inſtruction, of mankind.

His attempt to unite people of diſcordant opinions deſerves the higheſt commendation; and at the meetings of miniſters and delegates from congregations of the baptiſt denomination, he, for many years, held a conſpicuous place. Of ſuch aſſociations, indeed, in the mid-

mid-land counties he ſeems to have been the original founder. His ſermons charmed the hearers, his agreeable and edifying converſation the delegates, and his paſtoral letters the particular ſocieties. But, in the end, his friend Dr. Evans's remark was found too true: "I fear, ſaid he, the more we aſſociate, the more we ſhall quarrel."

Robinſon's aſſociation-letters have been much admired; and, as theſe pages will probably fall into the hands of ſuch as are unacquainted with the economy of diſſenting churches, as well as of the diſſenters themſelves, no apology, it is hoped, will be thought neceſſary for inſerting one in the Appendix *, though publiſhed before.

But the exerciſe of the benevolent affections is more conſpicuous in attempts to alleviate the diſtreſſes of our fellow-creatures, than in forming ſchemes to direct their conſciences. What is an union of religious ſentiment, unaccompanied with the moral virtues, unallied to the generous paſſions? It may be founded on the mere irritation of groſs ſelfiſhneſs, or an ambition to govern ſuperior minds; on the inſolence of a narrow bigotry, or the dreams of ſacerdotal ignorance. Robinſon knew, that to

* No. III.

conquer the human heart, you muſt attack it by goodneſs. He wiſhed not to form cold devotees, but affectionate Chriſtians. The materials, with which he worked, may be ſeen in the proper place*. They may furniſh important hints to benevolent readers, more particularly to diſſenting miniſters.

To purſue him at this period through all his generous movements, forming religious ſocieties, arranging their diſcipline, ſettling their diſputes, adviſing and aſſiſting their miniſters, would be endleſs: what, therefore, might be obſerved concerning particular congregations, ſhall be paſſed over: it will appear by the proper reference†, that the care of all the churches began to intereſt his heart. He took great pains to aſcertain their exact numbers, their diſtinguiſhing ſentiments, and their various circumſtances. No one could devote himſelf with greater ardour, and more unaffected ſincerity, to their diſtinct intereſts, both as a controverſial writer, and as an occaſional friend; and, for many years, no one enjoyed a larger portion of their eſteem. It may not be unintereſting to church-men, as well as to diſſenters, to purſue the ſtatement made out by John Thompſon, a reſpectable diſſenting miniſter of Clap-

* Appendix, No. IV. † Appendix, No. V.

ham,

ham, well known for his accurate knowledge of the diſſenters' hiſtory, and, for many years, Robinſon's intimate friend.

But his acquaintance with the diſſenting miniſters and churches in Cambridgeſhire, and the neighbouring counties, was more particularly intimate, and more generally extenſive. From the paſtor of each of the congregations in Cambridgeſhire he procured an authentic account of every particular ſociety*; and, indeed, of ſome he was himſelf the founder. For many years he was a kind of father to their young miniſters, a generous friend to their poor, and the idol of all their aſſemblies.

Merely to gratify curioſity on ſubjects of little moment, argues a narrow mind: and when a preacher reckons over the number of his diſciples, what is he doing? Perhaps only indulging the vanity of his own heart. Of the latter paſſion Robinſon had his portion: but he appears to have been principally influenced by conſiderations of utility, and animated by motives of generoſity. As early as the year 1771, he uſed, it ſeems, to preach lectures regularly in the villages adjacent to, and ſeveral miles diſtant from, Cambridge. To this prac-

* Appendix, No. VI.

tice we have already had occaſion to allude: an employment, to which his talents were admirably adapted; in which his heart greatly delighted. In this way he delivered thoſe ſixteen diſcourſes, ſo much admired in diſſenting churches, that have been called village ſermons.

An object, that he kept invariably in his eye, was to unite the different congregations in one bond of fraternal union. This point he purſued with the ſubtlety of a ſpeculatiſt, and the ardour of an enthuſiaſt: his reading, his obſervations, and, if I may ſo ſpeak, his experiments, were all directed to this favourite ſubject: but his ſucceſs was partial, and in the event, he was doomed to experience much diſappointment and ſevere mortification: he was for an union of love, moſt of the churches, for an agreement in doctrine and diſcipline. For ſeveral years, however, as he eſpouſed their theological ſentiments, they were proud of his connection; but revolting at laſt from the ſtandard of orthodoxy, he was leſs acceptable in their ſocieties; and found by ſevere experience, that religious aſſociations partake of all the bad paſſions of the men who compoſe them.

In the Appendix may be ſeen a letter to the particular baptiſt-churches, at Cambridge*,

* No. VII.

ſigned

ſigned by a John Stanford, which to ſome readers may be unintereſting, particularly, when they are informed that John Stanford was by profeſſion in no higher a walk in life, than that of a ſhoe-maker. Why, reader, ſhouldſt thou ſmile? The ſame character that urges thee to ridicule, will diſpoſe others to ſerioufneſs. Robinſon ever held it a maxim, that, in ſocieties moſtly compoſed of poor perſons, one or more of the officers ſhould be choſen from the loweſt claſs. "Such," he would ſay, "have a more intimate acquaintance with the wants of the poor, and poſſeſs more of the ſpirit of ſympathetic tenderneſs." In the original founding of the ſociety, the independence of the inferior members was carefully provided for. The meeting-houſe was raiſed by means of contributions raiſed amongſt the members; the richer voted a ſum to enable the poor to become ſubſcribers: it was not above eighteen-pence a piece,—a ſmall ſum, but enough to entitle them to the pleaſure of ſubſcribing, and to give them a kind of property in the houſe.

"Great pains," ſays Cicero, "ſhould be taken to anſwer the claims of all mankind; but where the caſe becomes a matter of diſpute, we ſhould imitate the conduct of Themiſtocles, who, on being conſulted whether he ſhould beſtow his daughter on a good man, though

poor, or on a leſs worthy man, though rich; "I," ſaid he, "prefer a man without money, to money, without a man."

In the preceding chapter, we have only touched on ſuch ſchemes of benevolence, as were adapted to the circumſtances of diſſenting ſocieties: ſuch as embrace the promotion of literature, or the common intereſts of philanthropy, will fall into their proper places.

CHAP.

CHAPTER VIII.

Robinſon's Plea for the Divinity of Chriſt.

OF a controverſy concerning ſubſcription to the thirty-nine articles, an account has already been given: a ſubject then conſidered rather as a queſtion, regarding civil and religious liberty, than the doctrines of Chriſtianity. But, from whatever cauſe, the men moſt averſe to ſubſcription, are uſually leſs tenacious of orthodoxy: a doctrinal turn was, therefore, given to the controverſy, and the divinity of Chriſt underwent a public diſcuſſion.

Among the petitioning clergy, a few men appeared, who afterwards conſcientiouſly quitted their preferments, and diſcovered conſiderable zeal in oppoſing the popular doctrine. Of theſe the moſt conſpicuous was Theophilus Lindſey, who reſigned the vicarage of Catterick in Yorkſhire, and wrote an "Apology for his Conduct;" and John Jebb, who alſo publiſhed "Reaſons for Reſignation." In theſe pamphlets arguments were adduced againſt the divinity of Chriſt. In this diſpute Dr. Samuel Hallifax, profeſſor of civil law, and ſucceſſively Biſhop of Glouceſter and St. Aſaph, came

came forward, but appeared to little advantage; Hallifax was but moderately acquainted even with the civil law; as a reaſoner he was very feeble, and as a divine flimſy and ſuperficial. His conduct alſo was ſaid to be diſingenuous *; and the oppoſite party triumphed over the inſufficiency of their adverſary. Hallifax now retired from the field, when Robinſon, taking up the gauntlet, publiſhed, "A Plea for the Divinity of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, in a Paſtoral Letter addreſſed to a Congregation of Proteſtant Diſſenters at Cambridge," maintaining, that "Jeſus Chriſt was truly and properly God." In proof of this he exhorts his brethren to attend to the following directions.

"Firſt, To conſult the language of the new teſtament, and compare it with the ſtate of the pagan world at the time of it's publication. Secondly, to compare the ſtyle of the new teſtament with the ſtate of the Jews at the time of it's publication. Thirdly, to compare the perfections which are aſcribed to Jeſus Chriſt in the ſcriptures, with thoſe which are aſcribed to God. Fourthly, to conſider the works that

* This is not mentioned in reference to Robinſon, with whom Hallifax was for ſome time intimately acquainted, but to Dr. Jebb: for an account of which ſee "Dr. Diſney's Memoirs of Jebb," Vol. I.

are

are aſcribed to Jeſus Chriſt, and compare them with the claims of Jehovah. Fifthly, to conſider that worſhip, which the ſcriptures claim for Jeſus Chriſt. Sixthly, to obſerve the application of old teſtament paſſages which belong to Jehovah, and to try whether they could acquit the writers of the new teſtament of miſrepreſentations, on ſuppoſing that Jeſus is not God. Seventhly, to examine whether events have juſtified that notion of Chriſtianity, which the prophets gave their countrymen of it, if Jeſus be not God. Eighthly, that if Jeſus Chriſt be not God, they will be obliged to allow that Mahomet has written more clearly on the nature of Chriſt, than the apoſtles have; and that the Turks, who reject the goſpel, have clearer notions of the nature of Jeſus Chriſt, than Chriſtians who receive and ſtudy it. Laſtly, to conſider what numberleſs paſſages of ſcripture have no ſenſe, or a very abſurd one, if Jeſus Chriſt be a mere man."

The doctrine is diſcuſſed under each of theſe points of view, in a popular form; and notes are ſubjoined to the pamphlet for his more learned readers.

The Plea is written with conſiderable ingenuity: the ſtyle is ſomewhat poliſhed, and the temper

temper of the author apparently candid, and liberal. Accordingly, a profuſion of compliments followed the publication, as well from ſeveral dignitaries of the church, as from the diſſenters. Dr. Hinchcliffe, Biſhop of Peterborough, Dr. Hallifax, afterwards Biſhop of Glouceſter, Dr. Goddard, Maſter of Clare Hall, Dr. Ogden, Woodwardian Profeſſor, Dr. Cooke, Provoſt of King's College, Dr. Beden, now Biſhop of Glouceſter, at that time public orator, Dr. Tucker, Dean of Glouceſter, and many others, courted his acquaintance: and it was pretty generally agreed, that the Plea was the beſt defence of the divinity of Chriſt, that had been publiſhed: this alſo was the opinion of William Hey, brother of Dr. Hey, of Sydney college, who himſelf appeared in this diſpute, and, in the judgement of many, to great advantage.

Was it not to be lamented that ſuch fine talents ſhould be buried in obſcurity? That a man of ſuch diſtinguiſhed abilities, and ſurrounded with ſo numerous a family, ſhould not have a decent proviſion? Would it not even promote the intereſt and reflect honour on the liberality of the church, to receive into her boſom ſo amiable a man, and ſo ſucceſsful a diſputant? Certainly. Handſome propoſals were, therefore, readily made him, but were modeſtly,

modeſtly, though firmly, rejected. On Dr. Ogden's addreſſing him, "Do the diſſenters know the worth of the man?" Robinſon replied; "The man knows the worth of the diſſenters."

Robinſon, however, continued for ſeveral years in an agreeable intercourſe with theſe men, and received from them occaſional civilities, more particularly from the Biſhop of Peterborough. Handſome compliments, likewiſe, were paid our author by the miniſters of his own perſuaſion, particularly Dr. Stennett, Dr. Evans, Daniel Turner, and ſeveral others of the moderate Calviniſts.

Many alſo of different denominations were not backward in their expreſſions of reſpect. His friend John Thompſon, in a letter, dated Feb. 13, 1776, ſpeaking concerning ſome of the more eminent among the independent miniſters, remarks, "I have read your Plea with ſingular pleaſure, but not more than I expected to receive from it. Every thing you write never fails to entertain and delight me. I cannot help joining with Dr. Furneaux and Dr. Kippis, in requeſting you, when you have finiſhed Saurin, never to ſpend your time in any more tranſlations; they ſay it is a great pity that a man who hath ſuch ſingular talents and abilities for original compoſition, ſhould be

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loſt to the republic of letters, by waſting them in tranſlations. Dr. Furneaux dined with me to-day, and a few minutes before dinner, I put your Plea into his hands; he had juſt time to read five or ſix pages, from whence, he ſaid, he could form a judgement of the whole, which he will purchaſe as ſoon as ever he finds it in town; but he has charged me, with his compliments to you, to tell you that you are not fit to tranſlate."

Theſe flattering teſtimonies were followed, however, by circumſtances of a more mortifying nature.

With the rigidly orthodox, the divinity of Chriſt is a fundamental in Chriſtianity, and the belief of it eſſential to ſalvation. "The temper of the Plea", ſays Robinſon, in a letter to a friend, "has procured me a deal of blame from the good folks, who inhabit the torrid zone. I wiſh people, continues he, would renounce their diſpoſition to damn mankind."

The truth is, the orthodox thought, that Robinſon held this weighty doctrine with too looſe an hand; his candour in controverſy was conſidered by them as an unſcriptural moderation: and they even queſtioned the ſincerity of his belief. While the Unitarians, ſo his opponents

call themſelves, thought, that he appeared rather as a flouriſher of his pen, than as a ſerious and weighty diſputant; that he aimed rather to diſplay his agility, than to ſecure a triumph; that his book was aſſertion without proof; an oſtentation of theological knowledge without an acquaintance with ſcripture criticiſm. "Indeed," ſays Theophilus Lindſey, "The author, here examined, has ſeldom given himſelf the trouble of doing any more than barely to bring together texts of ſcripture without explaining them, or even ſhewing how they apply to his purpoſe in proving Jeſus Chriſt to be truly and properly God, preſuming, that it would be granted at firſt ſight, and upon his authority, that they prove the point for which he aſſigns them: ſo that the title of this tract of mine might with very great propriety have been, 'An Explanation of all the Texts of Scripture produced by Mr. Robinſon in proof of the Divinity of Chriſt.' How far it may afford any thing new or uſeful, the reader will judge*."

Robinſon's Plea and Lindſey's Examination exhibit as clear a view of the controverſy reſpecting Chriſt's divinity, as any publications on that queſtion: and the reader who wiſhes to examine the merits of the controverſy,

* See an Examination of Mr. Robinſon's Plea. By Theophilus Lindſey, M. A. formerly Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge.

would

would do well to give them both a perusal. That Lindsey should direct his most serious thoughts, and all his critical skill, to this dispute, might reasonably be expected. The subject had been professedly investigated by him in a course of long enquiry; he was among the foremost of the petitioning clergy, and had been particularly solicited to it by some of his friends, and challenged to it by his opponents.

Robinson was considerably hurt by the temper of Lindsey's publication. "The Plea" is treated as a superficial performance, and the author himself did not escape without some expressions of asperity, by no means congenial to the gentle manner of his opponent, and his usual method of conducting a controversy. To Robert Tyrwhitt of Jesus college, who published two sermons on the Creation of all things by Jesus Christ, Robinson has expressed himself thus: "Some people handle their opponents sharply, but the temper of your pamphlet is gentle, yet judicious, and I am willing to be convinced."

The author of the Plea was much solicited to reply to Lindsey's Examination, more particularly as his opponents carried themselves like masters of the field, and expressed the language of triumph: but Robinson made no reply: which

which was to many a matter of ſurpriſe, hearing, that Robinſon had frequently been called upon for his defence, in letters from friends, Daniel Turner, Dr. Evans, Dr. Toulmin; and from the preſs, by Dr. Prieſtley and others, recollecting, alſo, that he himſelf had ſaid, "if ever he diſcovered his deception, he would retract his error." We ſhall make a remark or two on this ſubject in a ſubſequent chapter. The following reaſons are aſſigned by Robinſon, in a letter, for not anſwering the Examination. "I do not intend to anſwer the anonymous examiner*. He hath not touched my arguments, and his ſpirit is bitter and contemptuous. His faith ſtands on criticiſms: and my argument is, that if the doctrine require critical proof, it is not popular, and therefore not divine. Yes! they will have the laſt word, and let them."

It falls not within the province of Biography to ſettle theological diſputes. My opinion of this controverſy, without reference, indeed, to Robinſon's publication, as well of the doctrines, as of the criticiſms that ſupport them, may be ſeen in the third part of my "Inquiry into the Nature of Subſcription to the thirty-nine Articles." As to Robinſon, without going into the merits of the Plea, or an examination of his ſentiments, I cannot help expreſſing a perſuaſion, with which even his orthodox friends

* No author's name appeared to the firſt edition.

will, I doubt not, agree, that his mind had a kind of elaſticity that burſt from the ſevere rules of theological preciſion: to ſpeak the truth, Robinſon had read much on this ſubject, but was leſs qualified to write on it, than ſome of his brethren, who, if leſs ingenious, were more orthodox: and if the ſtyle and temper of the publication be excepted, leſs originality diſtinguiſhes it than many of his admirers ſuppoſe. He has evidently too cloſely copied his favourite Saurin, and Monſ. Abbadie*, another eminent French proteſtant, the latter of whom alſo borrowed his plan from Bullinger.

But ſome have aſked, " Was Robinſon's mind clear from embarraſſment when he wrote this Plea? I think not. Among his papers, is the Second Edition of the Letter to Dr. Hallifax, written by Mr. Blackhall, printed at Cambridge, prior to Robinſon's publication, viz. in 1772. This pamphlet contains marginal notes in Robinſon's hand-writing, which afford ample teſtimony that his idea of the nature of Jeſus Chriſt was unſettled. In page the twentieth of that pamphlet, where Blackhall ſays to Hallifax, " But you go on to prove that infinite knowledge is predicated of the Son and of the Holy Ghoſt, in the ſame manner as of the Father*." " The Son knoweth all things †.

* Letter to Dr. Hallifax, &c. p. 20.

† John, xvi. 30.

" He

" He needed not that any ſhould teſtify of man; for he knew what was in man*." In a marginal note, Robinſon remarks, " Do theſe paſſages prove the latter?" So again, page 22 of the ſame letter, where Blackhall ſays, " Our next conſideration is the attribute of power: even ſo the Son quickeneth whom he will †." Robinſon adds in a marginal note, " Power is one thing, underived power another." Numerous and indiſputable teſtimonies to the wavering ſtate of our author's mind might be produced from theſe marginal notes: the worthy Lindſey's unuſual tartneſs muſt, therefore, be aſcribed to ſome ſecret ſuſpicion, that his antagoniſt was not in ſober earneſt; and that, under a profeſſion of the moſt amiable moderation, he rather deſired to court the applauſe of both parties, than to cloſe with either. Many of the ſtricteſt trinitarians, as well as the oppoſite party, thought Lindſey acted in conſiſtency with his principles: and were rather diſpoſed to apologiſe for Robinſon, than to cenſure him, to ſay of him as Thuanus remarks of Eraſmus,

> ———Homo fuit atque humanus Eraſmus ‡.
> Eraſmus was a man, though frail, yet mild.

The letters that were exchanged by Robinſon, Lindſey, and Jebb, in conſequence of the

* John, ii. 25.

† John, v. 21.

‡ See Jortin's Life of Eraſmus.

Plea, cannot but afford pleaſure to our readers.

To the Rev. Mr. Lindsey.

FORGIVE a ſtranger to your perſon, but an admirer of your virtue, for intruding into your preſence. Your liberal ſentiments on religious liberty, and your voluntary reſignation of emoluments for conſcience ſake, have obtained you, ſir, and will continue to obtain you, the eſteem of all good men, who are not blinded by prejudice and party. If inſtances ſo rare be treated with contempt by a degenerate age, preſent peace, and future proſpects, will more than compenſate the ſufferers. The ſame conſcientious regard to truth, which has induced you to object to the divinity of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt in print, has induced me to attempt a defence of it, however unequal to the ſervice. Your virtue, ſir, has given your arguments conſideration, and it ſeemed to me impracticable to conſider the arguments without naming the perſon. For this reaſon, I beg your acceptance of a pamphlet, which the bookſeller has orders to deliver; and let me beſpeak your forgiveneſs, ſir, if any word unfriendly to your perſon, character, or integrity, has fallen from the author. May he who ſeeth not as man ſeeth, pity our frailty, accept our ſervices; and what we know not, may he teach us!

us! With the moſt ardent wiſhes for your preſent, and future felicity, I beg leave to ſubſcribe myſelf, reverend ſir,

Your Affectionate

R. Robinson.

REVEREND SIR,

I Take an early opportunity of acknowledging a very obliging letter received yeſterday, which was followed to-day by a preſent of your book, for which I thank you; and, before I read it, throughout, will venture to pronounce, that one whoſe heart could dictate the letter you have favoured me with, can never ſay any thing in the defence of his own ſentiments, that I, or any one, ought to be diſpleaſed with. That inquiſitive and ingenious men ſhould continue to differ ſo widely on ſuch a ſubject, is a continual call, ſir, to that candour and moderation towards each other, of which you are ſo ſtudious to ſet the example. I am, ſir, with very ſincere reſpect,

Your Affectionate Humble Servant,

T. Lindsey.

To the Rev. Mr. Jebb.

February 5, 1776.

GIVE me leave to thank you for the preſent of your late publication. The generous principles of the author will increaſe the eſteem of

all good men for him. On the coming out of that piece, which attacked a doctrine that many of the author's admirers conſcientiouſly held, I found ſome retaining the doctrine, and condemning its opponent, and others queſtioning the truth of the doctrine in compliance to the acknowledged merit of its opponent. I thought both ſides wrong; and ſuppoſed it my duty to ſhew both parties reaſons for retaining the doctrine, and venerating the man who denied it. The pamphlet that accompanies this, and which begs your acceptance, contains theſe reaſons. How forcible, each muſt judge. As the argument obliged me to mention you by name, I brought the manuſcript to town before it went to preſs, to ſhew you, in order to your ſtriking out any thing relating to yourſelf, which might appear unfriendly; unhappily, you was gone that morning to London. If any thing in the piece ſhould appear unkind, believe me, ſir, it has ſlidden in unawares. I had, I ſtill have, the higheſt opinion of the learning, candour and virtue of Mr. Jebb; and I am ſure he underſtands the nature of religious liberty, and the rights of conſcience ſo perfectly, that he expects no apology for a candid oppoſition to his ſentiments. You will allow me to ſay, what many would ſtartle at, it is not impoſſible, that our ſentiments, much as they ſeem to differ, may after all differ leſs than they

appear

appear to do. I look forward to that day when in a better world we ſhall ſee eye to eye: and with the moſt profound veneration, I remain,

Reverend Sir,

Yours moſt reſpectfully,

R. Robinson.

DEAR SIR, *Cambridge, Feb.* 7. 1776.

I Return you my hearty acknowledgements for your pamphlet, and the friendly letter with which it was accompanied. Although I muſt confeſs, that my opinion regarding the main point of doctrine, which is the ſubject of our conſideration, remains the ſame, I yet can ſay with truth, that I read your eſſay with pleaſure, and received, in many particulars, information and improvement from the peruſal. Your truly chriſtian temper in the diſcuſſion of ſo intereſting a queſtion, together with your generous ſentiments reſpecting religious liberty, I cannot ſufficiently admire,—and I thank you very ſincerely for the obliging manner in which you ſpeak of myſelf. I am, with great eſteem and every good wiſh,

Affectionately Yours,

John Jebb.

Before this chapter cloſes, juſtice requires the following obſervation. The Plea for the divinity of Chriſt Robinſon always profeſſed to

be rather a Sabellian, than a Trinitarian book, that its object was not to defend the ſtrictly orthodox ſide of the queſtion.—This year, in May, Robinſon publiſhed the Circular Letter of the Eaſter Aſſociation, which has been much admired in the baptiſt-churches.

During this period, the diſpute concerning the American war engaged our author's moſt ſerious attention: and, to ſpeak ingenuouſly, he was better prepared to write on that ſubject, than on a point of controverſial divinity: for, it ſhould be repeated, he was apt to indulge his fancy, and he poſſeſſed a moſt luxuriant one, and even his jocularity, which was uncommon, where his judgement was not preciſe, or his opinion, as to the importance of a ſubject, was no wiſe ſtrong; his favourite ſentiment being, whether right or wrong, let others determine, "that the belief of ſuch theories is unconnected with the happineſs of ſociety, or the future expectations of mankind."

"Well, brother," I have ſometimes heard him ſay, at the cloſe of a long debate on controverſial theology, "I muſt now begin to conſider the price of wheat, (for he was at the time I allude to a farmer) and leave thoſe who have more leiſure, and wiſer heads, to fathom profound

found doctrines." Nay, I have heard him say to some of his poor brother ministers, jokingly (for it must be confessed that he was accustomed to carry his jokes even into religious disputes) "Brother, I have delivered my present sentiments; but I am going to feed the swans at the bottom of my garden: on my return, I perhaps shall think differently."

In politics he felt an ardour that bordered upon enthusiasm: with subjects connected with government few men of his time were more conversant, none possessed more variety, or greater originality of ideas.

With the events, that passed from the period at which Great Britain first formed the determination of framing laws for America, till that when the United States of America rendered themselves independent, he had a most accurate acquaintance.

Of the American constitution he was a zealous admirer. Of general Washington he always expressed himself in terms of the highest respect, and frequently diverted himself, by comparing the endeared character and respectable station of that great man to the artificial distinctions and haughty claims of European despots:

deſpots: he could, at leaſt, go as far as Charles Fox, who has thus expreſſed himſelf: "That, compared with Waſhington, all the ſovereigns of Europe, our own excepted, were paltry and contemptible." He never maintained a regular correſpondence in America; as he confeſſed to Thomas Mullet, a reſpectable American merchant, now in London: but a few years after this period, his great worth and eminent talents were well known to the leading men in that country; very handſome propoſals were made him, to ſettle in the United States: and in the joy experienced by the Americans, on having eſtabliſhed their independence, he moſt cordially participated.

From the year 1775, there are numerous aſſortments of his letters, for his correſpondents became numerous: though a great variety have moſt probably been either loſt, or returned to the original writers. Among his correſpondents this year, are, Dr. Majendie, whoſe father had been pupil to Saurin, when at the Hague; Thomas Holloway, an ingenious artiſt, who made the engravings of Saurin, and of Robinſon; Dr. Gifford; William Whitchurch; William Curtis, late a worthy diſſenting miniſter at Linton, Cambridgeſhire; Joſhua Toulmin (now Dr.), author of the Life of Socinus, and various

ous other publications, theological and political; Daniel Turner, M. A. author of Meditations on various Paſſages in the Scripture, Eſſays on Important Subjects, &c.

CHAP-

CHAPTER IX.

Various Incidents of his Life in 1777.

AMONG the moſt favourable occurrences in the life of Robinſon during the year 1777, may be reckoned his acquaintance, that commenced at this period, with two excellent women, Ann and Suſannah Calwell; of whom it will be ſmall praiſe to ſay, they were perſons poſſeſſed of a very ample fortune. They had the penetration to diſcover, and the diſpoſition to patroniſe, diſtinguiſhed abilities. To their friendſhip Robinſon was highly indebted: through their liberality, encouraging him in his literary purſuits, he enjoyed a degree of learned eaſe, that he had never yet experienced, and a part of that property, which he afterwards poſſeſſed.

The above excellent women came this year to reſide at Trumpington, a village two miles from Cambridge, on the London road, in a houſe, the property of Chriſtopher Anſtey, the author of the New Bath Guide.

This year, alſo, I conſider as a fortunate æra in my own hiſtory: from the latter end of it, my acquaintance with Robinſon began to ſtrengthen;

ſtrengthen; his preaching I had been accuſtomed to attend before. Henceforth, therefore, the reader muſt not be ſurpriſed to meet with a frequent repetition of the perſonal pronoun, *I*. The language of egotiſm cannot well be avoided, where the biographer ſpeaks from his own knowledge, and aims to touch the features of an original character from more immediate obſervation.

A pleaſing recollection of former friendſhips, alſo, inclines me to notice, that I introduced to his acquaintance ſome young men of the univerſity, more particularly Bryan Bury Collins, of St. John's college, a perſon of great worth, and an elegant poet: he afterwards became a popular preacher.

The ſituation of Robinſon's generous friends at Trumpington became in the end peculiarly favourable to his theological purſuits: he being engaged in preparing a work for the public, which required a larger collection of books, than his own library afforded. The work alluded to, was, An Eſſay on the Compoſition of a Sermon, tranſlated from the French of John Claude. Of the performance itſelf a more complete account ſhall hereafter be given. The only circumſtance, belonging to the preſent chapter, ſhall be given in Robinſon's own words. "I had the misfortune, by a fall from a coach,

coach, to ſprain my ankle. This laid me long aſide from my public labours, and deprived me of what, above all things in the world, I loved, frequent preaching lectures in the villages, where members of my congregation lived. I endeavoured to conſole myſelf, and aſſiſt my brethren, by reviſing, enlarging and publiſhing this eſſay. To this ſeveral gentlemen adviſed me, and at the ſame time Chriſtopher Anſtey, eſquire, of Bath, generouſly offered me the uſe of the large library of his good father, the late Dr. Anſtey, and my good friends Mrs. and Miſs Calwell, both generous benefactors to our education-ſociety at Briſtol, where pious young men, recommended by our churches, are prepared for the miniſtry, liberally furniſhed me with every accommodation, hoping, as the excellent tutors of that ſociety have been pleaſed to think, that the Eſſay might be of great advantage alſo to their pupils."

Of the abovementioned inſtitution it may be proper to obſerve, that it was firſt ſet on foot in the year 1770. The proper founder was Dr. Evans, ſon of Hugh Evans, M. A. the late highly reſpected paſtor of the baptiſt meeting-houſe, in Broadmead, Briſtol, who died 1781. The original managers of it were Hugh Evans, M. A. preſident: Caleb Evans, M. A. who in 1789 received diplomas of D. D. both from Aber-

deen, and Rhode Iſland, where the baptiſts have a college; and James Newton, M. A. tutors: alderman Bull, treaſurer; and Thomas Mullett, ſecretary. The original library has been encreaſed by a valuable legacy, bequeathed to it by the late Thomas Llewellyn, LL. D. conſiſting of a library, which coſt more than 1500l. and by another, bequeathed by Andrew Gifford, D. D. late of the Muſeum. This legacy conſiſted of a library, pictures, and coins, valued at 1000l. The preſent value of the library, philoſophical apparatus, coins, &c. may be eſtimated at 4000l. This circumſtantial account has been made, as connected with the practice of Robinſon, who made it an invariable rule to oppoſe a vulgar notion, that the baptiſts diſcard literature.

The preſent preſident is John Ryland, a ſenſible divine of the Calviniſtic perſuaſion. He was elected in 1791, and has ſince received from Rhode Iſland the diploma of D. D. He is the ſon of the late John Ryland, M. A. of Northampton, a man of conſiderable reading, and an original genius.

In ſeveral letters from friends this year to Robinſon, are expreſſions of condolence on account of his indiſpoſition, and of advice to be leſs eager and reſtleſs in his literary purſuits.

But

But to ſuch advice he rarely felt himſelf at ſufficient leiſure to attend; and to his imprudent indefatigable zeal, he, at length, fell a victim. From a well-organiſed ſyſtem, unimpaired by youthful debaucheries, unmanly effeminacies, or waſting intemperance, he might have enjoyed all the vigour of health, and all the hilarity of ſpirits. Of this he was too confident: he ſeemed to think nothing could ſhake his nerves; and uſed frequently to ſay with a jeſt, that "he had but one weak nerve: this came from his breeches pocket:" but while laughing at people with weak nerves, which was his invariable practice, he was inſenſibly ſapping his own vitals.

His characteriſtic feature was love of liberty. The tendency of his numerous writings goes rather to demoliſh ſyſtems of tyranny, than to erect the tyranny of opinion; to emancipate the human underſtanding; to prepare it for fair inveſtigation; to enable it to preſerve, as it were, a natural tone, a perſonal vigour; not to bend it by compulſory rules; to vaſſaliſe it by mean obſervances; or to incloſe it by fantaſtic theories. Hence his oppoſition to religious eſtabliſhments.

All Robinſon's writings proceed on the diſſenters' principles: but though full of hoſtile deſigns

deſigns on the church, they aſſumed not the air of a direct attack. His friendſhips could not win him over to be a churchman; but they ſoftened the rigour of the diſſenter.

His acquaintance was now courted by ſome of the more independent part of the diſſenting body: they addreſſed him as a man whoſe powers were formidable, and whoſe polemic adroitneſs had been repeatedly acknowledged by the epiſcopal party. He, therefore, collected new ſtrength, and aſſumed a firmer tone: the anti-hierarchical principles, which he had hitherto arranged only in private, or thinly ſcattered in publications, he now began to form into a regular and well-diſciplined body, intending to make a formal and unevaſive aſſault.

" The Hiſtory and Myſtery of Good Friday," which he publiſhed this year, contains a ſpirited and judicious attack on thoſe religious eſtabliſhments, which impoſe the obſervance of feſtival days and ſuperſtitious practices. This work, though ſmall, poſſeſſes great merit: it contains only fifty-ſix pages; but diſplays throughout great humour and no ſmall learning; it has been reprinted ſeveral times, and obtained a very extenſive circulation: it is one of thoſe intereſting publications, which, to uſe an ex-

preſſion of Robinſon's, " by addreſſing the pockets of the common people, eaſily gains admitance to their underſtandings."

This ſmart bagatelle procured him many enemies among the clergy, and, at the ſame time, ſtrange as it may ſeem, made many, even of the clergy, his great admirers. His friend John Thompſon obſerves to him in a letter as follows, concerning this pamphlet: " The Hiſtory and Myſtery of Good Friday pleaſeth us much. A worthy epiſcopal divine writes to me, our clergy are angry, but it is an incomparable piece."

This pamphlet, together with the preface to the third volume of Saurin's Sermons, occaſioned Tucker, dean of Glouceſter, who had before paid him many handſome compliments through Sir James Stonehouſe for his Plea, to propoſe ſeveral queries to our author, through the medium of his friend Thompſon. The title to theſe pages is as follows: " Queries relating to Religious Liberty and Church Eſtabliſhments, ſubmitted to the Candor of Robert Robinſon, the learned and ingenious Tranſlator of Saurin's Sermons." Robinſon and his friends were pleaſed with the candor of the dean, but thought him a ſuperficial inveſtigator of theſe matters: and as the queries

queries were circulated only in a private and anonymous manner, Robinſon, Thompſon, and Dr. Furneaux, gave a private anſwer.

The only original work that Robinſon publiſhed this year was the above bagatelle. He, however, communicated to Dr. Kippis, in conſequence of a letter from him, ſeveral particulars concerning Baker, an eminent and learned antiquary, late fellow of St. John's college, Cambridge. Theſe relate to his manuſcripts, which are very numerous and valuable, and ſeveral anecdotes concerning the author. The materials were procured from the public library of Cambridge. Theſe communications were ſent to Dr. Kippis, and may be ſeen in the Biographia Britannica, under the article Baker.

Among his correſpondents this year, were Jonathan Mather, a man of conſiderable fortune, and a great admirer of Robinſon; Capel Lofft, an ingenious and learned man, well-known from his various publications in law, politics, criticiſm, theology, and poetry; Dr. Randall, profeſſor of muſic at Cambridge; Sir James Stonehouſe, late a phyſician at Briſtol; Dr. Evans, late of Briſtol; William Hey of Leeds, author of the Treatiſe on the Divinity of Chriſt, alluded to above; J. Robotham, for ſome years

a preſbyterian miniſter at Cambridge; Dr. Kippis, editor of the Biographia Britannica; John Thompſon, a diſſenting miniſter; R. Beadon, public orator at Cambridge, now biſhop of Glouceſter; J. Lucas, Bury St. Edmunds.

CHAP-

CHAPTER X.

A general Review of Robinſon's Character.

THIS chapter is devoted to a few remarks on his private, domeſtic, miniſterial, and literary character. The great man is conſpicuous elſewhere; the amiable man is contemplated at home.

The dictates of nature are much the ſame in all undepraved hearts, though genius is wont to feel differently from common minds, and to diſplay a kind of original appearance in the moſt common actions.

Robinſon was accuſtomed to practiſe family worſhip; but his addreſſes were neither violent or declamatory on the one hand, nor long and circuitous on the other. The former he would have thought an inſult to the Being he addreſſed; the latter to the family. His tone was ſoft, his ſentiments manly, his language tender and domeſtic. He uſually read a portion out of the chriſtian ſcriptures, but never expounded them in his family.

Of filial affection he was a model. It is ſaying little, to obſerve, that he ſupported his mo-

ther to a very advanced age: this he thought his higheſt honour. Nothing afforded him ſo much pleaſure as to adminiſter to her conſolation in affliction, and to ſmooth the path of her declining years. He knew how prone old people are to dwell with delight on former tranſactions. Robinſon met this natural inclination, by frequently converſing with his parent on ſubjects, that engaged her early life; and the ſight of an old friend, as it adminiſtered to his mother's gratification, was a cordial to his own boſom.

In his conjugal relation, he was attentive and affectionate: and inſinuations to the contrary have proceeded from miſtakes, or were raiſed by inſidious and deſigning men: by tranſient viſiters his pleaſantries may, ſometimes, have been miſinterpreted into ſeverities; but the ruder paſſions were ſtrangers to his heart. He might, indeed, to ſome, appear to keep too far aloof from the endearments of domeſtic life: and it is true, that various purſuits might, frequently, divide his attentions, and literary labours occaſionally abſorb his regards. But his breaſt could not be the ſeat of indifference: no man was more capable of fixing the female heart by manly affability, and by unaffected ſweetneſs.

No parent ever poſſeſſed greater affection, or was more inclined to indulgence.

His opinions concerning the education of children, were thought by many perſons rather eccentric. The enthuſiaſm of his genius made him appear romantic. Yet, what is genius, but a power of ſeeing further than common minds, and of removing difficulties with greater eaſe? Attentive to young people, and fond even to weakneſs of children, particularly of his own, he ſuppoſed, that the latent fires of genius begin to kindle very ſoon; and he was ſtudious, by gentle meaſures, to fan them to a ſteady flame. The innocent delights of children he by every means encouraged: nothing more diſguſted him than the cuſtom of overawing their underſtandings, by injunctions and reſtraints. "What is this" he would ſay, "but to be a deſpot of a family, to bind nature hand and foot?" He rather invited enquiry, than impoſed taſks: he thought a tyrant over children was generally a perſon of the weakeſt intellect.

His opinion was, that young people recollect longer, what they diſcover by their own ſagacity and obſervation, than in the way of formal leſſons. Great part of his houſe was ſtuck over with pictures, of inconſiderable value, as

to price, but rich with principles of inſtruction. "Children," he uſed to ſay, "catch the moſt uſeful hints in their moſt unguarded moments." It is not aſſerted that he poſſeſſed no weakneſs, that he was guilty of no indiſcretions; but if he was ſometimes weak, he was more frequently great. He knew himſelf to be a ſuperior man, and was always diſguſted at weak people, who obtruded on him directions how to govern his family.

He was thought by ſome to be too familiar with ſervants: and it was frequently his fortune to receive into his houſe perſons, who could get little employment elſewhere: he was influenced as much by compaſſion, as by conſiderations of private utility: indeed he poſſeſſed the art of governing tempers, thought by others unmanageable; and of bearing with weakneſſes, which would throw many into convulſions. The truth is, the art of governing conſiſts in a man's knowing how to govern himſelf: with him it was a conſtant maxim, "that nothing ſo much humaniſes the heart, as bearing with the infirmities of others."

Two examples may ſerve to illuſtrate this view of Robinſon's character. There was a perſon known by the name of poor John of Norwich, (alias John Carlton), who was a kind

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of idiot, or, at leaſt, paſſed for one, who had been acquainted with Robinſon when a boy at Norwich. He had been *called*, that is, had become religious, under Robinſon's miniſtry when a preacher in that city; and he could not be ſatisfied, till he became a ſtrolling preacher. Whether the man was ſo ſincere as Robinſon apprehended, will not be enquired: Robinſon, at leaſt, thought him an honeſt man, though poſſeſſed of the underſtanding of an infant. He even encouraged him to preach, and actually ſigned a paper as a kind of teſtimonial, by virtue of which, poor John ſtrolled about the country, and liſped nonſenſe, for he could not ſpeak a word plainly: he frequently preached in Robinſon's family: how many ſinners he converted, or how many ſaints he comforted, is of little conſequence. Robinſon, at leaſt, did not entirely loſe his end; he endured this man's occaſional viſits, and was the means of procuring him ſupport.

The other example is that of a needy though ſincere old woman, whom he for a conſiderable time ſupported in his family. The poor creature had ſcarcely common ſenſe, but was without the leaſt guile. Robinſon uſed to hear all her religious tales: and whenever ſhe was in a ſtate of *ſoul-deſertion*, Robinſon was at leiſure to drop ſome gracious goſpel-promiſe into her ear: when ſhe

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was in a ſtate of religious exaltation, Robinſon partook of all her triumphs.—She was deaf.

It being, however, the misfortune of Robinſon, to meet with bad people, who abuſed his kindneſs, he knew how to expreſs his indignation; for, indeed, the ſame tenderneſs of diſpoſition that renders man ſuſceptible of benevolence, makes him equally ſenſible of an inſult. Hence it was, that he could bear with the natural imperfections, the undeſigning follies, and indiſcretions of men: yet to unmerited ſlander, and ſtudied malevolence, he bore ſtrong reſentment.

The moraliſt, who addreſſes a depraved heart, is like a philoſopher making an hazardous experiment: not only may his exertions prove fruitleſs: he may receive poſitive detriment. The philanthropiſt, alſo, while healing the wounds of others, may catch a diſeaſe that cannot eaſily be cured: he may fall, like the phyſician, while raiſing another—and fall perhaps by his patient's hand. If the numbers recovered by Robinſon from profligacy, or aſſiſted in diſtreſs, were counted over, how great would his character appear; his inſtructions, his liberalities, were not confined to parties. When his countenance glowed, it was the language of the ſoul, that could not have been expreſſed

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ſo well by ſounds: but he could alſo ſhew greater contempt of a vicious character, by a well-directed frown, or hint, than could have been conveyed by the moſt forcible language, or the bittereſt reproaches.

An inſtance occurs to me, when Robinſon expreſſed his feelings on ſuch an occaſion. A poor diſſenting miniſter, of an indifferent character, had been frequently entertained at his houſe. Robinſon had given him clothes, food, and money, introduced him to his Cambridge friends, and permitted him to preach in his pulpit. He was a very orthodox man, "ready to burſt with orthodoxy," as Robinſon uſed to expreſs it: but approving, at leaſt, practically, the ſentiment, "that gratitude is no virtue," he turned out a ſecret enemy to his benefactor: miſrepreſenting his character, ſpreading alarms about his religious ſentiments, and even preaching againſt him in his own pulpit. Robinſon, at length, became acquainted with his ſlander, and underſtood all his inſidious intentions. He interrupted not the harmony of his viſit, nor diminiſhed the number of his enjoyments; but rather, during his continuance in the neighbourhood, heaped on him more civilities, preſerving towards him, in his converſation, all the mildneſs of a child, and all the frankneſs of a brother miniſter. But when, about

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to depart, the man advanced to take his leave of Robinſon, then was the time for him to ſuffer correction, and he received the moſt ſevere and poignant rebukes: the more ſevere, becauſe adminiſtered with apparent gentleneſs; the more poignant, becauſe he was addreſſed as a religious man.

An inſtance of a more ſingular kind will occur to ſome of his friends. Robinſon had conceived himſelf moſt injuriouſly treated by a perſon, whom he had ſuppoſed his friend: he lived to obtain evidence, that the party ſuſpected was not the man, who committed the injury. So ſtrong and violent a diſlike, however, had been conceived by Robinſon, that of this perſon, he is ſaid never afterwards to have entertained a good opinion, nor to have lived with him on terms of friendſhip: Robinſon, perhaps, might poſſeſs ſufficient proof, that the general turn of his character was inſincere.

His ſenſibility in receiving a civility was equal to his delicacy in conferring one. In the early part of his life, when he was very poor, a perſon thought he had conferred an extraordinary favour on him, by obtruding on his acceptance an old ſuit of black clothes. Robinſon was one day dining at his table. "Mr. Robinſon," ſaid the donor, "I never ſaw you look

look ſo much like a gentleman." "Sir," replied Robinſon, "I cannot afford to look like a gentleman:" then taking the butter-boat, he emptied it on the clothes, and immediately going out, he ſtripped himſelf, and putting on his own clothes, he took his leave.

Another example will ſhew the value put by Robinſon on ſuch loquacious liberalities. Though in the act of conferring numerous favours on others, he was in circumſtances that required aſſiſtance. He became acquainted with a perſon of conſiderable fortune. One day, in a mixed company, this man was diſcourſing with him about his large family, and preſented him, at the ſame time, with a purſe, collected, perhaps, from different perſons. This was accepted; but holding up the purſe in his hand, and caſting an arch look at the donor, Robinſon addreſſed him in ſuch terms as ſhewed, he put no great value on the preſent.

It may be aſked, did not Robinſon, in theſe inſtances, diſcover pride? Perhaps ſo. But might not the others diſcover more? Robinſon uſed to confeſs, that "on certain occaſions he was as proud as a Spaniard."

A wiſe man eſtimates a preſent, not according to its intrinſic weight, or immediate utility, but

but to the diſpoſition, with which it was given. An obligation ſhould receive a proportionate acknowledgement: but to over-rate it, may injure him who confers it: and from the perſon, who receives it, very unreaſonable returns may be expected. Does a man, in rendering you aſſiſtance, remind you of your poverty? You are inſulted. Does he remind you of the greatneſs of his preſent bounty, and call the eyes of the world to gaze? He betrays his own vanity. He ſhould be made to underſtand, that ſuch, as offer incenſe to their own importance, loſe the credit of benevolence, and may be injured by the expreſſions of gratitude.

Here follows an example of genuine humility. With Robinſon, it was a maxim, " that if a child but liſped to give you pleaſure, you ought to be pleaſed." Hence it was, that the ſmalleſt expreſſion of kindneſs from villagers, though it were but lighting his pipe, was followed with tokens of his eſteem. To a faſtidious delicacy he was a total ſtranger. When occaſionally preaching in barns, he uſed to be delighted in viſiting his poor brethren: and, when ſolicited, would regale himſelf with their brown bread, and black tea; but took care, at the ſame time, that they ſhould loſe nothing by their attentions. I frequently attended him in theſe rural excurſions, and

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was always charmed with his converſe. "When a poor perſon ſhews anxiety to adminiſter to your comfort," he would ſay, "do not interrupt him: Why deprive him of the pleaſure of expreſſing his friendſhip?" Among his papers is found a liſt of memoranda, or little commiſſions to be executed by him when in London: among ſeveral for his more wealthy friends, are found ſuch as follows: B—'s Petitions. Gown for poor M——. M. M.'s ſon to be ſeen. H. wiſhes Mr, H. to be merciful.—W. thinks his ſon's wages are too ſmall.—Watt's Hymns for T. H.—Teſtament for C.

The following note alſo, written to Dr. ——, in 1772, ſhews that Robinſon knew how to acknowledge a civility, when beſtowed in a gracious manner.

"The favour you was pleaſed to beſtow by the hands of Mr. ——, on the receiver's part wholly unſolicited, on the donor's ſo handſomely conferred, demands gratitude and thanks: accept them, reverend ſir, and ſuffer it to be added, that if the gift affords ſome pleaſure, the benevolence which confers it, affords much more. Heaven haſten the time when Chriſtians ſhall learn religious war no more! when magiſtrates ſhall ceaſe to require, and Chriſtian miniſters to yield a ſubjection of conſcience to penal laws.

If

If it was not too ſerious for ſatire, with much more reaſon might the oppreſſed complain, than Juvenal.

——————— Sævas imponite leges.
——————————— Dicat
Nutricem Anchiſæ ; nomen patriamque novercæ
Archemori : dicat quot Aceſtes vixerit annos, &c.

The church of Rome, however blameable, is yet conſiſtent in confining her favours to her own community ; for ſhe confines heaven too to the ſame church ; circumſcribing infinite goodneſs within the narrow limits of a party. But when proteſtants turn partizans, who is ſo blind as not to ſee the incongruity of ſuch a conduct ?—Your generoſity, ſir, to one, who, it is ſuppoſed, receives a creed different from your own, forces this."

As a ſtudent, Robinſon poſſeſſed ſome ſingularities: that he was uncommonly induſtrious, no one will deny: never was there a perſon, over whoſe ſtudy door might be put with greater propriety, " Idle hours, not idly ſpent*." He was always employed : what many people gain in a way of ſolemn ſtudy, came to him in a way of recreation ; reading, writing, giving

* Sir Henry Wotton's motto over his ſtudy door. See his Remains.

advice,

advice, employments in the fields, or in the farm-yard, (I allude to the time when he was a farmer) totally occupied him when at home.—The letters that he received and wrote, were incredible. Yet he could be as gay as any man: for no one was leſs of a pedant: he would frequently reprove a ſerious coxcomb, who, without learning, without talents, and without induſtry, made great pretences to application, ſaying, "God help me and my children! we have not ſo much time for ſtudy as you gentlemen of literature." No man more excelled in this way of raillery. If he ſaw a young fellow vain with the pride of literature, when, perhaps, extremely ignorant, he would addreſs him with exceſſive flattery; and when on the point of burſting with ſelf-admiration, he would attack him with all the poignancy of raillery. Indeed, ſo much did he excel in this art of varying his addreſs, that you might ſuppoſe yourſelf converſing at different times with Cheſterfield, La Bruyere, Theophraſtus, and Rabelais. "This," he would ſay, "is the proper way of teaching a conceited young fellow the knowledge of himſelf." For the advice of men of literature, he was always thankful, but was too proud to liſten to dictators. He poſſeſſed what is called modeſty, properly defined; but he knew himſelf to poſſeſs ſuperior talents.

He had read much, had thought much, had digeſted much. His favourite ſtudies were languages, metaphyſics, morals, politics, law, and hiſtory. With the ſcience of mathematics he had no acquaintance. He poſſeſſed a reliſh for the beauties of the Greek and Latin claſſic writers, and had read many of them. In the French language he was well verſed. The French writers he approved; but Voltaire and Rouſſeau he admired. His knowledge of the Hebrew was not critical or extenſive. In order to procure original information for two learned hiſtories hereafter to be remarked on, he in the latter part of his life ſtudied Italian, German, Spaniſh, and Dutch. His way of acquiring a knowledge of theſe languages, was to ſit down to an author without any previous knowledge of the grammar, and to refer only to the grammar, as to his dictionary. Religion was his profeſſion, and he had in the early part of life read much of theological controverſy. He had an accurate acquaintance with the hiſtories of the Old and New Teſtament: but as a verbal critic, his knowledge was not exact, nor his judgement profound.

As a companion, Robinſon poſſeſſed a great fund of entertainment and inſtruction: with the ſerious he could be as ſerious as any man, and he could deſcend to the greateſt jocularity. Apt rather

rather to enquire than diſpute, to concede an argument, rather than inſult an adverſary, the theologian intruded not on the province of the friend.

His wit was ready; his ridicule, on proper occaſions, pointed and ſatirical; and his power of holding people in laughter uncommon. Some, indeed, thought he was farcical on ſubjects that required ſerioufneſs; but to people very ſolemn, yet ſtupid and conceited, he would allow himſelf to ſay, "Brother, explain the matter; when I comprehend the ſubject, I'll preach about it." Towards every truly good and honeſt man, however ſimple, he could ſhew the greateſt indulgence: but coxcombs, particularly when in black, were the abhorrence of his ſoul.

On one point, he was rather deciſive. Prieſthood, in his eſtimation, was the grand adverſary, or, to uſe his own language, "the great black devil," whom all good *non-cons* ſhould oppoſe. Had he known how, he would have deſtroyed this enemy: yet with prieſts, he could live in agreeable intimacy, and interchange ideas. Bleſt with a talent for ſprightly converſation, and poſſeſſed of much general knowledge, he was courted by wiſe men, and his condeſcenſion rendered him acceſſible to the

weakeſt. Called, in the diſcharge of his duty, to intimacy with perſons of various occupations, he acquired a peculiar art in turning their viſits to account, ſo that different mechanics, when diſcourſing with him on their particular callings, enquired, " Whence did this man derive his knowledge?" In the conſtitution of his mind, and the general turn of his manners, he was a mixture of Rouſſeau and Socrates: his admirers pronounced him a diſciple of Jeſus; yet ſome thought he took a few leſſons from Cheſterfield: to an uncommon degree, he could pay adulation and could endure it: before knaves he was reſerved; but he could flatter fools.

As a teacher of religion, he was an unique: his voice was uncommonly harmonious; and his eyes were in conſtant motion; he uſed to ſtudy the countenances, and the circumſtances of his audience. His beſt ſermons roſe out of the occaſion, and his images were drawn from familiar objects. This mode of addreſs has been particularly noticed by Sir Iſaac Newton, and others, as agreeable to the practice of the eaſt, and the conduct of Jeſus. Hence there appeared great animation in his diſcourſes, and an eaſe, remote from the pedantry of preaching, and a diſplay of knowledge. The clerical appearance, and even the miniſterial character, he by no means approved; on the contrary, he made

made them the ſubject of his frequent raillery, as well in private circles, as in the pulpit. His wiſh was, to lead people to think, and to act, for themſelves: at the ſame time, no man poſſeſſed greater power over a congregation. In many reſpects, therefore, he was ſomewhat accommodating; and without affecting to govern, his ſway over his audience was irreſiſtible. He appeared no where to more advantage, than among the pooreſt of his flock. Each Sunday he devoted the intervals betwixt morning and evening ſervice, to friendly intercourſe; and being fond of a pipe, though he was never a drinker, he uſed to get his poor people round him at an old widow woman's houſe, near the meeting: here he gratified himſelf in hearing their diſtreſſes, in anſwering their difficulties, and, to the beſt of his power, in relieving their wants.

He would, indeed, ſometimes mix in his addreſſes too many ſhining thoughts, and glittering expreſſions, through his imitation of Saurin: but this was contrary to his better judgement and more ſober conviction: he was, in general, the ſimpleſt of all ſpeakers. He invariably preached extempore, and, of courſe, was not always to be depended on: his manner had too much the air of mere converſation, to captivate the admiration of tranſient hearers; and

ſome of the moſt elegant lectures that I ever heard him deliver, have been given to him by friends, from paſſages of ſcripture, juſt before he aſcended the pulpit.

Ars eſt celare artem, was exemplified in Robinſon as a public ſpeaker. From nature he had received much; he was alſo much indebted to art, and had formed himſelf by the beſt models. The qualifications of an orator are by no writer laid down with greater accuracy, than by the Roman orator; and it would be difficult to exemplify them better than in the perſon of Robinſon.

"In an orator," ſays Tully, "there ſhould be invention, arrangement, elocution, memory, and pronunciation. Invention is the deviſing of facts, that are true, or that reſemble truth, ſo as to give a cauſe the air of probability; arrangement is the order, and proper diſtribution of thoſe facts, aſſigning to each its proper place; elocution is the adapting of proper words, and ſentences, to the facts; memory is the mind's ready perception of facts, of words, and of method; pronunciation conſiſts in a graceful regulation of the countenance, voice, and geſture*."—The laſt qualification no perſon poſſeſſed in a higher degree, than Robinſon: his

* Rhetoricorum lib. i.

voice,

voice, as before obſerved, was uncommonly muſical, and he poſſeſſed great ſkill in adapting it to the different paſſions that moved him, and the countenances of his hearers; but amidſt all its varieties you heard the ſame voice; he was different from thoſe declaimers, who, while they attempt to accommodate their voices to different ſubjects, reſemble a man playing on different inſtruments: he was never boiſterous, rarely feeble, and ſeldom whining.

To theſe general qualifications of an orator, —and a natural orator he certainly was of the firſt rank,—he ſuperadded profeſſional peculiarities. His character, in this reſpect, has been well delineated by the worthy and learned preſident of New College, Hackney:

" What your preacher was, you well know. How inſtructive and intereſting in the matter of his diſcourſes, and in the manner of his delivering them, you well remember, and cannot well forget. There was always a variety, and often an originality, both in what he ſaid, and in his mode of ſaying it. It was his conſtant aim to lead the attention of his hearers to the weightier matters of the law, to inform the judgement before he attempted to intereſt the paſſions: and, after inculcating juſt notions of

truth and duty, to enforce a correſponding practice. There have been few preachers, if any, who have done ſo much, both in this neighbourhood and in London, to reſcue the human mind from bondage; to correct prevailing errors, to promote a liberal ſpirit of enquiry, to recommend mutual forbearance and candor among Chriſtians of different opinions; to weaken their attachment to creeds and forms of human device and impoſition; and to direct their chief attention to the principles and duties of piety, virtue, and univerſal charity. He had a manner of ſupplanting rooted prejudices, without occaſioning alarm; of ſapping, if I may be allowed the expreſſion, inſtead of ſtorming, the fortifications of error; of gaining aſſent to general principles, inconſiſtent with the opinions which he wiſhed to expoſe; and of leading men to think, judge, and determine for themſelves, and to purſue thoſe principles to their conſequences: in which he wonderfully excelled, and which produced, in many inſtances, the beſt effects. In his judgement, I have reaſon to believe, nothing was fundamental, nothing was eſſential to men's intereſt in the favour of God, and the everlaſting benefits of the goſpel,—but an honeſt heart and a holy life. By contributing to diffuſe the prevalence of this principle, he promoted union, and fellowſhip, and mutual affection among Chriſtians

Chriſtians of very different ſentiments and denominations."

But we ſhall dwell no longer on the character of Robinſon, as a preacher or teacher. His own ideas of what a public inſtructor ſhould be may be collected from his tranſlation of Claude's Eſſay on the Compoſition of a Sermon. —This appeared the proper place to attempt a delineation of Robinſon's character, as about this period I became more intimately acquainted with him.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XI.

An Account of two Publications of Robinſon's, entitled the Hiſtory and Myſtery of Good Friday, and a Syllabus of Lectures on Nonconformity.

BY his publication, entitled the Hiſtory and Myſtery of Good Friday, it appeared to many of Robinſon's clerical friends at this time, that their complaiſance and civil intentions received an ungrateful return. But Robinſon knew, that all hierarchical ſyſtems countenance oppreſſion; and that the complaiſance of a church dignitary, ſoliciting a man of talents to conformity, may proceed from a principle widely different from genuine benevolence. The reputation of gaining a conſiderable proſelyte, or of diſarming a formidable opponent, is frequently the cauſe of exertions apparently generous. Determined, therefore, to break all meaſures, he formed a deſign of confirming young diſſenters in their ſeparation from the eſtabliſhed church. He laboured diligently to promote lectures on the principles of conconformity, and, accordingly, publiſhed, in the year 1778, A Plan of Lectures on the Principles of Nonconformity, for the Inſtruction of Catechumens.

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The merit of this work is uncommon, and it contains the outlines of the whole controverſy of the diſſenters with the church of England, and of their hiſtory from the period of the reformation, to the year 1778. Each chapter contains ſhort heads, which were to be filled up by the lecturer. How much admired by his brethren this performance was, may be ſeen by the letter of their "Eaſtern Aſſociation."

EASTERN ASSOCIATION.

Harlow, Eſſex, June 18, 1778.

This Syllabus, entitled "a Plan of Lectures on Nonconformity," drawn up by our brother Robinſon, has been read and approved of by us at this aſſociation, and we hereby commend it to our ſiſter churches.

Signed, by order of all, by
MORGAN JONES, MODERATOR.

The diſſenters' bill had juſt then been depending in parliament, and the debate in both houſes was warm. Of this Syllabus the moſt honourable mention was made in the Houſe of Lords, by Lord Shelburne: and in the Houſe of Commons, Burke, by ſelecting ſome detached paſſages, grounded on them an illiberal attack on the diſſenters, which was well repelled by Charles Fox.

Theſe

Theſe incidents inclined our author to publiſh it, and it ſoon went through five editions; and ſeveral pamphlets were publiſhed againſt it under the ſignatures, Candidus, and Veritas, Niger, and Mendax.

The remarks that were moſt worthy of reply were written by Mr. Burgeſs, prebendary of Wincheſter; who animadverted on it in a Courſe of Letters, addreſſed to the biſhop of London. Robinſon intended to have made a formal reply, but dropt his deſign, perceiving that Burgeſs miſtook the nature of the controverſy. In the preface to the fifth edition he obſerves as follows, "The reverend prebendary of Wincheſter, who thought fit to animadvert on this book, in a ſeries of letters, addreſſed to his lord biſhop of London, acknowledges the want of ſome reviſion, and reformation; and in this he ſpeaks the language of all conſiderate members of his community: but the ſubjects to be reviſed are the Articles, and the Liturgy, not the point, the great point, religious liberty, on which all the controverſy turns. We object againſt a conſtitution; and we are anſwered by encomium, on the officers who adminiſter it: a dignified clergyman could not ſay leſs, and a prudent biſhop would not wiſh for more."

This

This ſingular work forms a plan for the moſt ſyſtematic attack ever made on the church of England; and that muſt be the apology for dwelling ſo long on it: we lay the following ſpecimen of its character, which contains the heads of the third lecture.

A General View of Queen Elizabeth's Church.

INTRODUCTION.

Revealed religion always gloried in a public expoſure.—Moſes publiſhed his miſſion in the moſt learned—and inquiſitive—court then in the world.—The prophets did not preach in dark places of the earth,—they reproached dark pagan prieſts for peeping and muttering in obſcurity.—Jeſus Chriſt taught no ſecrets.—He commanded the apoſtles to publiſh his Goſpel on the houſe-tops, and they obeyed him ſtrictly.—Truth gains by expoſure—and if ſilent acquieſcence were eſſential to prelatical ſafety, it would be a violent prejudice againſt it.—One knows not what to make of the inconſiſtency of this church—it publiſhes laws, books, &c. and ſeems to challenge examination,—and yet it publiſhes other laws, and other books to prohibit examination. We ſhall go by the former, and place it in ſeveral points of light to obtain a juſt notion of it.

View I.

The ſyſtem acquires no reputation from the times in which it was formed—nor from the perſons who formed it.—Neither Harry nor Elizabeth had any piety nor one ſound notion of civil government.—They were only neceſſary to the reformation, as they were leſs tyrants than the pope.—Stateſmen ſacrificed religion to ſave the nation.—Prelates were choſen for ſecular purpoſes—and all perſons—and events—were directed to crown uſes.—There was very little learning—leſs deliberate moderation—and no philoſophy in any of themall.

View II.

Prelatical hierarchy is not religion.—It is no part of moral philoſophy, which is natural religion—nor of the plan of redemption, which is revealed religion—it is a direct violation of both—People in the community may think themſelves religious—as the deformed think themſelves handſome,—or they may be religious—as trees may be fruitful in an unfriendly ſoil,—but the conſtitution itſelf is not religion—nor calculated to promote it—Nor faith—Nor repentance, &c.

View III.

The hierarchy, conſidered as a corporation, is uncon-

unconſtitutional—Its creeds—and canons—and rules of government—are a kind of bye-laws—which are unconſtitutional when they violate the firſt allowed principles of government.—Charters,—patents,—and monopolies—flowing from regal prerogative—are ſo far illegal—as they injure ſociety at large.

View IV.

Prelacy, as a ſyſtem of governing, is unſound at heart.—In all good governments, the people are the origin of power—but the people have no authority here.—The parliament that authenticated the hierarchical ſyſtem exceeded their powers.—The people could not commit—nor did they commit the choice of a religion to them: and had they elected them for that purpoſe, they could not conſtitutionally bind their ſucceſſors—and they might as well have ſtated our taxes to the end of the world—as our religion.—Prelacy has always thriven moſt under arbitrary princes—and diſcovered one uniform invariable attachment to dominion over conſcience.

View V.

An eſtabliſhed hierarchy is baneful to learning—eſpecially ſound critical religious literature.—A given ſenſe of ſcripture—impoſed by oath on juniors—precludes free inquiry, the

ſoul of learning—and poiſons education at the ſpring head.—Accordingly the ſcriptures ſink into diſrepute.—Divinity is no ſcience at univerſities—Claſſics and mathematics are all in all—there is nothing to find out in religion.—Thirty-nine articles tell all.—There is nothing to improve—for, to ſwear not to endeavour to alter, is to give up the idea of improvement.—There is nothing to defend: the ſword does that—no uſe of reaſon—argument—perſuaſion,—for the people were all made Chriſtians at baptiſm.

View VI.

The epiſcopal eſtabliſhment may be viewed as falling in, or rather out, with the generous plan of redemption to be communicated by preaching. The plan was laid to make all men ſee the manifold wiſdom of God, by preaching the unſearchable riches of Chriſt;—but this ſyſtem drives ſome away from public worſhip—fatigues others with tedious, unmeaning ceremonies—leaves but a few minutes for preaching—employs them but ſeldom, and then devotes them to a rapid declamation—of a dry morality—a dream to amuſe,—or a drug to ſtupefy.

View VII.

Conſider epiſcopacy as it affects property, —calculate

—calculate the charge of introducing, ſupporting, adorning, employing it. It is an enormous tax impoſed on induſtry, to empower a few individuals to ſign a few uſeleſs papers,—to loll in indolence,—to riot in luxury,—and to defeat, among lords, what liberal acts for religious liberty are ſupported by commons.

View VIII.

Prelacy hurts morality :—morality is either ſupported by perſonal principles,—but this ſyſtem is formed for the deſtruction of principles,—or by imitation of bright examples ;—but alas ! how few ſuch have we heard of !—and how are prevarication, hypocriſy, formality, bigotry, &c. propagated by it !—Finiſh by placing prelates and people before the judge of the whole earth at the laſt day. Repreſent the glorious redeemer exhibiting his faithful ſervants,—whom prelacy ruined for claiming their natural and religious rights,—and ſaying to theſe holy tyrants, "Theſe had meat, drink, and habitations,—but ye reduced them to hunger, thirſt, and baniſhment. I gave them cloathing, but ye ſtripped them naked.—They had health and liberty from me,—ſickneſs and impriſonment from you :—depart."

If Robinſon treated the church of England with ſeverity, let it be remembered, that he

was in a poſt of obſervation, whence he could not but diſcover, both in the ſyſtem of the eſtabliſhment, and in the conduct of the clergy, what muſt excite both his ridicule, and his indignation. He was endued with a quick penetration and a refined ſenſibility. He had been accuſtomed to pore over the hiſtory of the nonconformiſts, and to read the long catalogues of their ſufferings; and, though he was aware that men make ſyſtems, yet he alſo knew, that ſyſtems make men.

The reſpectful manner in which the Syllabus was mentioned by lord Shelburne in the upper houſe, and the ſpirited manner in which the biſhops were addreſſed by him, obliged the clergy to conſider its contents: ſeveral preached againſt it; and the biſhop of Ely, particularly, being the ſpiritual father of the See, in which this arch-heretic lived, made ſome ſevere remarks on it, in his Viſitation Sermon: but Robinſon, having now broken all meaſures, conducted himſelf with a kind of conſcious dignity. "What I have ſaid," he obſerved, "is mercy to what I could have ſaid."

Some things there certainly are cenſurable in this publication; the finiſhing part of the lecture quoted above has been thought more particularly ſo. On this being objected to him by

by a friend, he replied, "I venerate a good man, whether a biſhop or a cobler: a perſecutor is neither a religious nor moral character; but a wicked man. I blame the bench, not as biſhops, but as tyrants."

The following is a letter, from Thomas Curtis, a ſhrewd diſſenting miniſter, which will explain this ſubject.

"My dear Brother,

"LAST Monday was performed in the place denominated the church, in this town, a farce, called the Confirmation; I call it ſo, for ſo one of the principal performers ſtiled it,—one who ought to know what it was: the performer I allude to was no other than —— Ward, B. D. chaplain to the right reverend Edmund Keene lord biſhop of Ely. Will you believe me, when I aſſure you, and in truth I do ſo, that ſo he ſtiled it to me, in the chancel of the ſaid church, in the midſt of the ſaid performance, or rather, at the end of the firſt act? He knew to whom he ſaid this; the occaſion of which, &c. when I have the pleaſure to ſee you, I ſhall explain."

At this viſitation Robinſon's works were mentioned in terms of particular reſpect, with

the exception, however, of the Syllabus. Handſome mention, likewiſe, was made by the biſhop of the ſerious manner in which the diſſenting miniſters performed their devotions, and of the careleſs manner, in which they were performed by the eſtabliſhed clergy. At dinner Curtis thanked the biſhop in the preſence of the clergy for the compliments paid the diſſenters, and the biſhop drank his health which was returned by Curtis."—Thus concluded the farce! Robinſon in ſhort, had ſeen ſo much of the mummery of religion acted in the church; had been as it were behind the curtain, with ſeveral learned and ingenious performers: and how natural for one of his caſt to mix the "ridiculum acri!"

CHAP-

CHAPTER XII.

An Account of Robinſon's Tranſlation of Claude's Eſſay: a Hint to Diſſenting Miniſters.

AT the cloſe of the year 1788, our author publiſhed an Eſſay on the Compoſition of a Sermon, tranſlated from the original French of the Rev. John Claude, with notes, in two vols. 8vo. To this work there has already been occaſion to allude.

This divine ſtood at the head of the reformed party in France, at the time of the revocation of the edict of Nantz, was a man of acknowledged abilities, of extenſive literature, and of approved virtue. His theological ſyſtem was that of the French Proteſtants of his time,—Calviniſtic. Whether our readers be orthodox or heterodox, a ſhort account of this eminent perſon may afford them amuſement. A more compleat hiſtory of him may be read in Bayle, Moſheim, in the Acta Eruditorum, *Vie de Claude*, and other writers. Buddeus ſays of him, "Dubito an recentiori ætate aliquem majori omnes proſequuti ſint veneratione, quam Joannem Claudium;" that is, "I doubt whether in the

preſent age, there is a ſingle character, that all parties have ſo venerated, as John Claude."

The following ſhort account written by Robinſon, and prefixed to his tranſlation of the eſſay, is ſubmitted to the reader:

" It was in the year 1598, ſoon after the acceſſion of Henry IV. that the reformed obtained, by an edict drawn up at Nantz, entire liberty of conſcience, a free admiſſion to all employments of truſt, honour and profit, the uſe of churches, and univerſities, the liberty of holding ſynods, and whatever elſe was then thought neceſſary to the ſecurity of their civil and religious rights.

" While the churches enjoyed theſe privileges, the Rev. F. Claude, father of our author, was ſucceſſively paſtor of ſeveral reformed congregations in Lower Guienne, and was univerſally eſteemed for the pious and honourable manner, in which he diſcharged his office. John was born at Sauvetat in 1618; his father, who was a lover of polite literature, took care of his education during his youth, and at a proper time ſent him to Montauban to finiſh his ſtudies. Having accompliſhed his courſe of philoſophy, he applied himſelf to the ſtudy of divinity under profeſſors Garriſoles and Charles.

The

The fire of his imagination, the acuteneſs of his judgement, the ſincere piety of his life, and particularly the modeſty and affability of his manners, obtained him as many friends as tutors. In him, from his earlieſt years, were united the gravity of a divine, and the eaſy politeneſs of a courtier."

Claude was at firſt paſtor of La Treyne, and, in ſucceſſion, of St. Afrique in Rouergue, Niſmes, one of the moſt conſpicuous churches in France, Montauban, and Charenton. After the revocation of the edict of Nantz, he retired to the Hague, where he was in great repute with the Prince of Orange; and here he publiſhed his Eſſay, for the uſe of his ſon, who was paſtor of the Walloon church at the Hague. His controverſy with the learned Boſſuet on the ſubject of re-union with the Popiſh churches is well known, and the iſſue affords a demonſtration, that liberty is alike eſtranged from Preſbyterian, as well as from Popiſh and Epiſcopal church government. Robinſon, however, maintains, that liberty is to be found in a fourth community; whether he is accurate, ſhall be left to the reader's determination. The following paſſage poſſeſſes a glowing animation of ſtile, and great liberality of ſentiment:

" Sacred religious liberty! Whither art thou

fled? Where ſhall I find thee? Methinks I hear thy plaintive voice in the wilderneſs! Lovely inhabitant of the deſert! How beautiful are thy feet even on the rugged mountains! How enlivening thy voice! Lift it up with ſtrength, and ſay unto the cities, Peace, Peace, behold your God!

" Whether the fourth community, of which we now ſpeak, came from the valleys of Piedmont, or whether it originated among thoſe reformers, who, conſiſtent with their own principles, made pure ſcripture the rule of reformation, it is certain ſome ſocieties appeared, very early, advocates for congregational church government. The churches included both Baptiſts and Independents. Some, as the Browniſts, ran liberty into licentiouſneſs, and others, as Robinſon in Holland, and Jacob in England, ſometimes explained and arranged, and at other times rather cramped matters; but all held the principle of ſelf-government, and the abſolute independence of each congregation on any exterior juriſdiction. Here, as in all ſafe civil ſocieties, the baſes and principles of good government are held. Individuals are born free, each with liberty to diſpoſe of himſelf. Several individuals congregated, carry together ſeparate power, and depoſit it in any degree, more or leſs, as the whole

whole think fit, in one aggregate ſum, in one or more hands for the public good. Officers, choſen by all, to hold and diſpenſe this delegated power, are in truſt only—conſequently, reſponſible to their conſtituents; and all their power is conſtitutionally revertible to the ſource, whence it came, on abuſe of the truſt, or at the demiſe of the truſtee.

" As all this buſineſs is ſpiritual, power extends only over ſpiritualities. Life, liberty, property, credit, and ſo on, are all inſured in another office, entruſted in other hands, under the care of civil governors. Here then is religious liberty: various churches enjoy it in various degrees: but in thoſe churches, where infants are excluded, and where all are volunteers,—where each ſociety pleaſeth itſelf and injures nobody,—where impoſition is not known, and where blind ſubmiſſion cannot be borne,—where each ſociety is a ſeparate family, and all together a regular confederacy, unpaid for believing, and far from the fear of ſuffering,—there does religious liberty reign: we enjoy this liberty in England. It ſeems good to our civil governors to oblige us to purchaſe it by a reſignation of ſome of our civil birth-rights: we think this hard. However we pay the price, and enjoy the purchaſe."

Of

Of the liberty of many of the independent and baptiſt churches, no leſs than of the others, Robinſon lived to entertain no very high opinion: for in his attempts to unite them, he found himſelf oppoſed by intolerant creeds. The truth is, liberty is rather the acquiſition of individuals, than the inheritance of churches, or bodies of men :—but we have wandered.

Beſides the preſent Eſſay, John Claude publiſhed a very learned work, entitled, " A Defence of the Reformation :" this work ſhews, that the reformed in France took very confined views of religious liberty. Of this work, however, Robinſon juſtly obſerves, " That it is allowed by all to be a maſter-piece,—the beſt defence of our ſeparation from Rome, that either he, or any other proteſtant miniſter, had ever publiſhed."

The following critique on Robinſon's tranſlation of Claude's Eſſay, appears in the Monthly Review for Auguſt 1779.

" The art of preaching, from the nature of the objects, on which it is employed, and the importance of the ends, which it is intended to anſwer, ſo well deſerves, and, after all the varieties of forms, in which it has been practiſed in different ages, is ſo capable of further

improve-

improvements, that every judicious attempt to place it on it's true foundation; to deduce it's laws from rational principles; to point out the defects which have attended, and ſtill attend, the practice of it, and to render it of more general utility, merits the attention of the public. In the work here tranſlated, the rational divine will meet with much good advice, which a judicious underſtanding, and improved taſte, may apply to great advantage, on the compoſition and delivery of ſermons.

" This publication, however, derives it's principal value from the original notes, which the tranſlator has ſubjoined, in which, after the manner of Bayle, he has introduced a great variety of remarks and quotations, which anſwer a better purpoſe, than that of elucidating the text; affording the reader much valuable information, and agreeable entertainment. Theſe notes are exceedingly miſcellaneous, conſiſting of pertinent examples of the beauties or faults of preaching, from various writers, and theſe, many of them little known, curious and often humourous anecdotes, ſenſible reflections, and bold and free ſtrokes of ſatire. From this miſcellany, we could with pleaſure ſelect many amuſing articles; but we chooſe rather to fill up the ſpace which we can allot this work, with a few extracts from the tranſlator's introductory

ductory eſſays, from which it will appear that he writes with great boldneſs of language, and with all the zeal of a reformer."

The above circumſtantial account of Claude's Eſſay, the reader muſt not interpret into an approbation of the ſyſtem of doctrine interwoven in it, or as a declaration of its being a perfect model of pulpit eloquence. One who undertakes to deliver lectures from a particular book, ſhould not deſert that volume to run after partial ſyſtems; yet ſuch is the method laid down by Claude.

The following letter, alſo, written by a ſenſible, though unlearned diſſenting miniſter, poſſeſſes humour and good ſenſe.

" I ought long ere now to have acknowledged with gratitude, ſo pleaſing a teſtimony of your reſpect and friendſhip for me. The advertiſement prefixed ſays, the Eſſay is publiſhed for the benefit of miniſters, who have not had a regular academical education: the deſign of the notes is always to make the text underſtood; when one of theſe miniſters comes to a rule of Mr. Claude's, which he does not fully comprehend, and follows the figure of reference to the bottom of the page, in hopes Mr. Robinſon will explain it to him, that gentleman

tleman addreſſes him in language that he cannot underſtand.

" I remember I once ſuggeſted to you the propriety of tranſlating the Greek, Latin, and French notes. I now forget what were the reaſons you gave for not doing it, except one which I never could forget; it was, that there would be enough in all reaſon for mere Engliſh readers. We are certainly under great obligations to you for what you have done: and if you ſay it is enough, we humbly ſubmit, and acknowledge, it is more than we had a right to demand: but after all we cannot help thinking, that a ſuit of clothes, for which we have been accurately meaſured, and which was avowedly cut out and made up for us, ought to fit and ſit eaſy upon us: but this with ſubmiſſion." The name of this miniſter was Lombard; there is likewiſe a ſenſible letter on the ſame ſubject from Thomas Curtis, at that time a diſſenting miniſter at Linton.

The following extract from the Diſſertation, prefixed to the ſecond volume, is left for the reader's meditation: the authority that makes the declaration, will not be diſputed.

" The hiſtory of the pulpit is curious and entertaining; it has ſpoken all languages, and in

in all ſorts of ſtyle. It has partaken of all the cuſtoms of the ſchools, the theatres, and the courts of all countries where it has been erected. It has been a ſeat of wiſdom, and a ſink of nonſenſe. It has been filled by the beſt and the worſt of men."

After giving his reaſons for the preceding publication, Robinſon obſerves as follows:

" With views of this kind (I ſpeak in the fear of God), and not to give offence to any, I collected and publiſhed the notes in the following Eſſay. Alas! does a modern epiſcopalian undertake the defence of every abſurdity exhibited to the world, by every thing called in times paſt a biſhop? Or ſhall a modern non-conformiſt adopt all the weakneſſes of every one who was perſecuted out of the eſtabliſhed communities? All orders of men examine and reform themſelves: do men in black alone intend to render impropriety immutable and everlaſting? I have exemplified the abſurdities complained of by Mr. Claude by the works of our anceſtors who are dead and gone, on purpoſe to avoid offending. Indeed this was neceſſary; for who alive has one impropriety to quote?"

Robinſon adds, " I deſigned to have added

to theſe two, a third volume of the ſame ſize, entitled, "An Eſſay toward an Hiſtory of Public Preaching." I have, however, laid aſide the plan, made uſe of a few extracts in theſe notes, torn, burnt, and given away moſt of the other papers, and patterns of ſermons, that I had collected, and never more intend to reſume the ſubject."

To complete, therefore, the view taken of Robinſon as a public ſpeaker, it ſhould be obſerved, that, in all his public lectures, the principles above related were for many years conſpicuous: his mode of addreſs was ſimple and inſinuating, his eloquence eaſy and natural, his tone modeſt and unaſſuming; his countenance expreſſed benevolence, and his doctrines, though favouring of Calviniſm, did not confine themſelves to the ſtrictneſs of that ſyſtem. He carried little of the air of a preacher for a party, except when his diſcourſes were interſperſed (which was often, indeed, the caſe) with political reflections, or with obſervations on the eſtabliſhed hierarchy. On the Eſſay two general and concluding remarks may be made: Thoſe who cannot read the notes, may approve the Eſſay; and, Thoſe who pay little regard to the Eſſay, may receive both amuſement and inſtruction from the notes.

From various paſſages in the notes, the readers

ers muſt conclude that Robinſon, though not what is called a violent, was yet a ſound Calviniſt: the following hyperbolical panegyric on Calvin may be reckoned curious, when conſidered in connection with his ſubſequent declarations.

"There is no abridging this ſententious commentator," he remarks: "and the more I read him, the more does he become a favourite expoſitor with me." Calvinus, ait Scaliger, ſolidus theologus et doctus, ſtyli ſat purgati, et elegantioris quam theologum deceat. Ille literas ſacras tractavit, ut tractandæ ſunt, vere, inquam et pure, et ſimpliciter, ſine ullis argumentationibus ſcholaſticis: et divino vir præditus ingenio multa divinavit, quæ non niſi a linguæ Hebraïcæ peritiſſimis (cujuſmodi tamen ipſe non erat) divinari poſſunt.

"O le grand homme! Il n'y a ancien à comparer à lui. Il a ſi bien entendu l'eſcriture! *Solus Calvinus in Theologicis.*" "Calvin," ſays Scaliger, "is a ſolid and learned theologian; his ſtyle is ſufficiently chaſtened, and more elegant, than becomes a theologue. He handled the ſacred writings, as they ought to be handled: I mean, with an eye to truth, with purity, and with ſimplicity, without any ſcholaſtic reaſonings. Poſſeſſed of a divine genius, he divined many things, that can only be divined by the moſt ſkilful

ſkilful in the Hebrew language (of which number, however, Calvin was not). Oh, the great man! So well did he underſtand the ſcriptures. Among theologians Calvin ſtands alone.—Scaligerana, Calvinus*.

A little time after the publication of Claude, viz. in May 1779†, our author printed a ſingle diſcourſe, hereafter to be noticed in a liſt of his ſermons, and ſmaller publications. Some of Saurin's ſermons he ſtill, occaſionally, tranſlated; the whole not being publiſhed, as hinted before, till a conſiderable time after the firſt volumes were before the public: all that concerns that performance, however, it ſeemed

* See Claude's Eſſay, vol. i. p. 232.

† It may not be improper to repeat, that Claude's Eſſay was laid before the public at the cloſe of the year 1778, as appears from letters to Robinſon: one correſpondent particularly mentions having read it, and returns thanks for the pleaſure, that he had received, December 9, 1778. It is, therefore, preſumed, that the work muſt have been out a month prior to that time. Robinſon dates the advertiſement prefixed to Claude, November 7, 1778.—This circumſtance is inſiſted on, to guard againſt the imputation of inaccuracy. Dr. Rees, in the Catalogue of our author's publications, ſubjoined to his two Sermons preached at Cambridge, dates this Eſſay, as publiſhed in 1779. The book, therefore, was probably not advertiſed till that year: and the title-page is dated 1779.—Theſe Memoirs are, for the moſt part, regulated by the dates of letters, as being, in general, the ſafeſt guides.

more conciſe to comprehend within the ſame chapter.

In the year 1779 I left the Cambridge diſſenters, after an acquaintance with Robinſon for near a twelvemonth.—My original grounds of diſapproving the eſtabliſhed church; for connecting myſelf with the Cambridge diſſenters, and, afterwards for a temporary deſertion of them; as well as for my more intimate relation to diſſenting aſſemblies in future life*, and, at length, for a final ſeparation from all, as aſſociated religious bodies, it would be improper now to unfold. Such particulars would charge the memoirs of Robinſon with tedious ſpeculations, motives of conduct, and numerous incidents, foreign to the preſent volume: the moſt diſtant alluſion ſhould not have been made to them, but for a few things occaſionally mentioned.

* On leaving Emanuel college, Cambridge, I was aſſigned as a kind of pupil to Robinſon by the baptiſt fund in London. This fund was inſtituted about eighty years ago, to aſſiſt miniſters, and ſtudents to be prepared for the miniſtry. For the ſum allowed me for a twelvemonth by this fund, during my reſidence with Robinſon, and after turn ing my back for ever on the church of England, I take this opportunity of paying my acknowledgements to the managers.—I left Robinſon at the expiration of the twelvemonth, and went to preach to a diſſenting congregation at Oxford in 1781.

But

But one occurrence happened in 1779, of a nature rather extraordinary, at that time a little intereſting to the diſſenters, and, particularly, to ſome of Robinſon's intimate friends: it muſt not, therefore, be left wholly unnoticed.

This year ſir Harry Trelawney, of Chriſt church, Oxford, deſerted for a while the church, and connected himſelf with the diſſenters.

This man had been a warm advocate for the Trinity: but his zeal had been cooled by Robinſon's Plea for the divinity of Chriſt: he firſt attached himſelf to the orthodox, and preached with great ardour among the methodiſts: he then joined the rational diſſenters:—*rational* is Trelawney's own word.

"If your pupil," ſays Dr. Toulmin, in a letter to Robinſon, "deſerted the cauſe of truth, and went back, we have in this neighbourhood a nobler example: a young gentleman of diſtinguiſhed pulpit talents, and very ſenſible, has withdrawn from the church; and though he has not aſſumed the character of a diſſenting miniſter, yet, it may be preſumed, will do it in the end. Sir Harry Trelawney furniſhes here a moſt complete example of ſeparation from it."

Trelawney was, at length, ordained among the orthodox diſſenters: delivered his Confeſſion of Faith, which was publiſhed, together with the Sermons and Charge at his Ordination.—It was after this, that he attached himſelf to thoſe, whom he called rational diſſenters.

A letter was afterwards addreſſed by ſir Harry Trelawney to the reverend Thomas Alcock, M. A. vicar of Runcorn in Cheſhire, and of St. Budeaux, Devon, and publiſhed. This letter affords ſufficient proofs, that Trelawney is a man of letters, not ſuperficially acquainted with the nature of the controverſy between the eſtabliſhed church, and proteſtant diſſenters. The two points inſiſted on in the pamphlet, are, firſt, "that ſubſcription to articles, that we do not believe, is a diſhoneſt, and prevaricating buſineſs:" ſecondly, "that by remaining a diſſenter, he ſecured that freedom of mind, which is the birth-right, and unalterable privilege of every rational creature." It is clear from theſe pages, that Trelawney, at the time, neither believed the doctrinal articles, nor approved the diſcipline of the church of England: and yet, almoſt immediately after the publication, he returned to Oxford, and was ordained.—He is now a country rector, in the Weſt of England.

Whether

Whether Trelawney was offended at the extemporaneous worſhip of many of the diſſenters, and thought that he loſt his rank in ſociety by nonconformity,—or whether he at length conceived that he could enjoy greater liberty in the church, and careſſed himſelf into ſubſcription by the doctrine of General Expedience, which Paley has ſettled to every conſcience*, is not inquired.—The example is here introduced as a ſingular phænomenon ; and in order to hold out a remark to diſſenters : " That they rarely obtain preferment by conforming : that when their miniſters are ordained in the church, they uſually become ſtationary, and receive little but mortification and diſappointment †."

Sir Harry Trelawney is in ſmall danger of having occaſion to apply the following epigram to himſelf. It was made on the death of a perſon in Scotland, who died in great agony, after conforming againſt his conſcience, and having gained a mitre.

Solatur fruſtra conjux, ſolantur amici,
Et medicum accerſi ſedulo quiſque jubet :
Sed dare ſolamen nemo, dare nemo ſalutem,
Te præter, poterit, Rex Iacobe, mihi.

* Paley's Moral and Political Philoſophy. Vol. II.

† Theſe were Robinſon's words on hearing that Trelawney had conformed.

Quæ corpus gravat, atque animum ſimul, exue mitram
Huic capiti; hujus onus me premet et perimet *.

My wife's and friends' conſoling words are vain;
Nor can the doctor's ſkill remove my pain:
Thine hand alone, O James! can aid impart,
Or ſoothe the anguiſh of my guilty heart.
The mitre's weight—Oh! raiſe it from mine head!
This loads my ſoul—and ſinks me to the dead. D.

About this time, Robinſon appears to have drawn up ſome memorials of the ingenious John Bunyan; and the concluſion drawn from his letter was that they were communicated to Dr. Kippis for inſertion in the Biographia Britannica: and ſo it was believed by many of his friends.

Dr. Kippis writes to Robinſon as follows: "We ſhall be thankful for any communications relative to John Bunyan; and they ſhall be fully noticed. The article in the old Biographia is a meagre one, and requires additions. I ſhall be glad of them any time within this fortnight." This letter is dated October 7, 1779.

Symonds, the diſſenting miniſter of the church where Bunyan was paſtor, ſays in a letter to Robinſon, "I am glad to find, that Bun-

* Piercii Fratrum Nonconformiſtarum Vindiciæ.

yan's

yan's character will be under your inſpection." He then gives a few dates, one or two circumſtances relative to Bunyan, and ſubjoins a ſmall liſt of books written by him, which Symonds ſays, "he had never ſeen." This letter is dated October 30, 1779.

The truth is, no ſingle part of the article on John Bunyan, in the Biographia Britannica, was written by Robinſon. The paſſage with the ſignature B. was compoſed by Broughton, who wrote in the old Biographia. That with the ſignature T. together with the notes, was written by Dr. Towers: and independently of what that judicious writer ſays, "that he never received any communications on that article from Robinſon," the peruſal of the article will bring to the ſame concluſion. For Dr. Towers's authorities quoted, are from the uſual ſources of information: and of the ſmall liſt of books, mentioned by Symonds, the only material circumſtance in his letter, no notice is taken.—There is alſo a note in the article, John Bunyan, written by Dr. Kippis: but this, alſo, is foreign to the contents of Symonds's letter. The preſumption, therefore, is, that Robinſon's obſervations were not communicated to the Biographia, or not received in time. On comparing the dates of the two letters, the latter ſeems to have been the caſe.

The information tranſmitted to the above-mentioned valuable publication, concerning Baker, the learned antiquary, of St. John's college, Cambridge, is intereſting and important: to this an alluſion has already been made: and it is reſpectfully acknowledged by the writer, Dr. Towers, in its proper place, with a juſt tribute to the abilities of Robinſon.

Whatever remarks, therefore, might have been prepared on Bunyan's life, were, moſt probably, publiſhed afterwards in the Biographia Evangelica: ſince, in a letter dated October 26, 1781, E. Middleton, a clergyman of the eſtabliſhed church, editor of that work, writes to him as follows: "I ſhall alſo think myſelf obliged to you to remember the life of good John Bunyan, which you was ſo kind as to promiſe me."—Mention having been made of the Biographia Britannica, it may afford pleaſure to ingenuous readers, to trace that ſpirit of candour, that guided the pen of Dr. Kippis, the late much reſpected editor of that work.

The following is an extract from one of his letters to Robinſon:

"DEAR SIR,

"I am not a little entertained with Mr. ——'s apprehenſions: and, in truth, he hath ſome reaſon

reaſon to be alarmed. It is poſſible that I may find niches for heroes whom he may not admire, and that I may introduce reflections which he will not entirely approve.

"However, if you ſhall think proper to wait upon him again, I deſire, with my compliments to him, to inform him, that, whatever my ſentiments may be on ſome points, I wiſh to do full juſtice to men of merit and learning of every party; that I am ſolicitous to have the Biographia a repoſitory of authentic facts; that, in that view, it cannot fail of being very uſeful, notwithſtanding any incidental remarks of the editors; and that we will inſert, with fidelity and reſpect, the communications with which we may be favoured. We hope ſo to conduct the work, as that perſons of literature will not repent of their aid."

Among Robinſon's correſpondents this year, are Robert Barlow, of Boſton; Dr. Kippis; Samuel Palmer, editor of the Nonconformiſts' Memorial; Thomas Dunſcombe, a baptiſt miniſter, of Bampton, Oxfordſhire; Commiſſary Greaves, of Fulbourne, Cambridgeſhire; Iſaac Hunt, of Liſſon Green, a clergyman of the church of England; John Lombard, a diſſenting miniſter, of Sudbury; and a few others already mentioned.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XIII.

Plan of a New College, which Robinſon attempted to inſtitute at Cambridge, and other liberal Projects; his Tour into Scotland.

IN the year 1781, our author formed a deſign, communicated to few perſons, that did him great honour. The reaſon for mentioning it ſo early, proceeds from the paucity of materials for the preſent chapter; but, particularly, from the conſideration, that, though he committed not the plan to paper, till a ſubſequent period, yet it became the favourite exerciſe of his meditation about this time.

The diſſenters in this country have been unjuſtly debarred from the advantages of the univerſities; and, in former times, treated with contempt for the very reaſons, that entitled them to honour: for is not a man, excluded from literary benefits, on account of his adherence to ſpeculative concluſions that his judgement approves, and which he has not ſufficient ſophiſtry to evade, entitled to the praiſe of integrity, and to the honourable appellation of "a witneſs to the truth?" Eſtabliſhed ſyſtems

tems are founded in a concealed injuſtice, and by an eaſy conſequence, produce an inſidious oppreſſion.—The academic triumphs in the ſuperior opportunities of gaining ſcience in univerſities; and the prieſt draws oſtentatious compariſons, grounded on ſuch opportunities, between himſelf, and nonconformiſts. Concede theſe ſuperior opportunities; allow, that the prieſt, which is now and then the caſe, hath reaped the fruit of them: but how unjuſt the triumph! How diſhonourable, how malignant the compariſon! On the one hand we behold a man erect, inſulting one on his knees; on the other, perhaps, a generous mind revolting at abſurd and inſolent creeds, accuſed of ignorance, as a kind of crime, though deprived of the means of knowledge, through his love of truth.

The tendency of eſtabliſhed ſyſtems is here alluded to; not their neceſſary conſequences. The diſſenter is frequently a wiſe man; prieſts are not always conjurors.

But how ſuperficial theſe ſyſtems! How ridiculous their caution! How inevitable their deſtruction!

Theſe reflections are not deſigned as vindications of any ſyſtem of ſectarian principles: but

but as a teſtimony againſt every ſyſtem of injuſtice. Ye painted maſſes of putridity, may your deformity be expoſed by the light of philoſophy! May that brood of evils, that ye have engendered, be ſpeedily cruſhed by the genius of liberty!

Robinſon was aware of the diſadvantages, under which his own party laboured in this reſpect. It is true, they have had among them a few perſons, whoſe abilities and learning all parties are willing to acknowledge: ſuch as Dr. Gale, Dr. Foſter, and Dr. Gill*.

But through their former depreſſion, through their excluſion from public ſchools, and univerſities, the baptiſts had poſſeſſed few diſtinguiſhed ſcholars. For though Dr. Ward, a man, himſelf, of extenſive literature, had ſettled a few exhibitions on their ſtudents at the univerſity of Aberdeen; and though a houſe of literature was appropriated to their uſe at Briſtol; yet the exhibitions for Aberdeen were very few; and the Briſtol inſtitution, as the late

* Dr. Gale was an eminent Greek ſcholar, and, as a theologian, acquired great reputation by his controverſy with Wall. Foſter was a modeſt and learned Socinian preacher; and Gill, the Calviniſt preacher, was a profound Hebraiſt.

preſident,

preſident, Dr. Evans, was willing to acknowledge, laboured under conſiderable defects. Robinſon's wiſh, therefore, was, that his party might enjoy the literary advantages of an Engliſh univerſity, without being ſubject to its theological ſhackles. He, accordingly, drew up a ſcheme, and ſubmitted it to ſome of the more learned and wealthy of them.—To his own eye, like many other theories, that he could never realiſe, it ſeemed to carry a long train of bleſſings, and dazzled with its luſtre, but it never became ſtationary.

To what cauſe it was owing, that this college was never founded, it is unneceſſary to conjecture. Robinſon was certainly much in earneſt: the writings were drawn up by his friend Capel Loſft, then a barriſter in the Temple; and it was the wiſh of Robinſon, as appears from many of his letters, though to me he never communicated his deſign, that I ſhould have been employed as a tutor: but, indeed, the wavering ſtate of my mind left ſmall room for any confidential repoſe in my exertions; and my ſubſequent rejection of baptiſm, the badge of this intended college, would have raiſed an inſuperable difficulty in the way of my future ſucceſs.

For the failure of this flattering ſcheme, many

many reaſons may be aſſigned; and probably ſome reaſonable objections might be urged againſt it. But to form conjectures is unneceſſary. Robinſon himſelf became, at length, leſs popular with his own party: and, without looking out for any other reaſons, his theories were leſs likely to obtain general acceptance.

All that is neceſſary to lay before the reader, is taken from extracts from two letters. To Daniel Turner, a diſſenting miniſter, in Berkſhire, he ſays,

" I have been thinking of your hints of an endowed college for diſſenting education, and wiſh you could think of any way to effect it. We want a college for law and phyſic, and for gentlemen of independent fortunes. Our intereſt has ſuffered much from this deficiency, by the ſons of ſuch gentlemen being ſent to our univerſities, who, of courſe, left us to go over to the church. This was the caſe of Lord Barrington, and ſeveral families in this neighbourhood. Mr. Atkins has an houſe near Wantage, that would do: he might, if he would, endow it with a thouſand a year; if you have opportunity, feel his pulſe about the matter, as fully as you can."

Atkins, mentioned in this letter, was a man

of extenſive fortune, who lived at Clapham, in Surrey; his country reſidence was in Kingſton Liſle, Berkſhire. He is now dead; but was well known for his liberality while living, and will be long remembered with gratitude, though now no more. Robinſon calls him "a perfect gentleman, an excellent ſcholar, and a good man."

This inſtitution lay much on Robinſon's mind, though afterwards he thought Cambridge the proper place for it.

In another letter, he ſpeaks as follows:

"In regard to the other article, literary foundation, our cauſe wants good ſterling literature. Private ſchools have not academical advantages. Scotch univerſities oblige us to exchange religion for learning: we value the laſt, but not ſo highly, as to purchaſe it at ſuch a price. I have ſuppoſed, if we could take about ſix boys, and educate them at Cambridge, ſo that they might have all the literary advantages of the univerſity, without the ſhackles, and vices, theſe boys might, in a few years, open an houſe of literature, and might educate two ſorts of lads,—poor boys by charitable ſubſcription; and gentlemen's ſons at their own expenſe. Such as were pious might be miniſters; ſuch

as

as were not, might practiſe phyſic, law, &c. and ſave all that money to the cauſe, in a courſe of buſineſs, which now we pay churchmen for. I know a gentleman who would give books, manuſcripts &c. to ſuch a houſe, worth 1000l. Dr. Stennett ſays they have the intereſt of two or three thouſand pounds in the funds for purpoſes of education; and he will try to turn it into this channel, if it can be realiſed. Long had I wiſhed to realiſe this. Call me an enthuſiaſt if you will: I will tell you what I call a ſingular providence."—Then follows a friendly and too flattering acccount of me.

Other humane projects of Robinſon's obtained better ſucceſs. Among thoſe that lay neareſt his heart, was the eſtabliſhment of a ſociety to aſſiſt poor miniſters, denominated the Cambridge Society for the relief of proteſtant diſſenting miniſters. The committee, conſiſting of ſeven perſons, met at the veſtry of the meeting-houſe at Cambridge, each benefactor ſubſcribing a guinea, and upwards,—thoſe who contributed one guinea, recommended one caſe; ſubſcribers of two guineas, two caſes, and ſo on. Was not this a more honourable way of aſſiſting diſſenting miniſters, than by Regium Donum? Every thing relative to this inſtitution may be gathered from the following letter: and of the Regium Donum, or king's bounty, future mention ſhall be made.

"Reverend

" Reverend Brother,

" Several humane gentlemen having obſerved the neceſſities of many diſſenting miniſters, their widows and families, and being deſirous to adminiſter to their relief, have formed themſelves into a ſociety for this purpoſe: they propoſe receiving ſubſcriptions from individuals and from churches, and to make an annual dividend of the money ſo ſubſcribed among ſuch neceſſitous caſes as ſhall come before them. If only two hundred churches ſubſcribe annually one guinea each, the ſociety will be enabled to diſtribute ten pounds a year, more or leſs, to twenty of the two hundred who are moſt in want. The ſubſcriptions to be paid on or before the laſt day in December, either to the paſtor of the baptiſt church at Cambridge, or to their agent in London, Henry Keene, eſquire, Walworth. Dividends will be made annually on the fifteenth of January, and the money punctually remitted. If this benevolent plan meet with your approbation, we truſt you will encourage it.—I am, ſir,

" For the Society,

" Your Humble Servant,

" A. B. Secretary."

Another inſtitution founded by Robinſon was, a Society for conſtitutional information. The

 object

object of this was the ſame as that eſtabliſhed in London by Dr. Jebb, major Cartwright, Capel Lofft, and others. On the formation of the London conſtitutional ſociety in April 1780, Capel Lofft ſent Robinſon a copy of their addreſs, and an account of their proceedings: theſe ſerved as models for the conſtitutional ſociety at Cambridge.

In a letter to a friend, written ſome years after, in which Robinſon deſcribes a meeting of the mayor, ſeveral aldermen and others of the corporation, to celebrate the revolution of 1688, he obſerves, "They wound up and confirmed my ſermons, by good revolutional ſongs. The truth is, by a conſtitutional ſociety of freeholders, which I had the pleaſure of forming amongſt a few diſſenters, and which is multiplied into a very large body of freeholders of liberal ſentiments, a great reſpectability, becauſe a great political weight, is acquired to the diſſenters of both town and country. We meet once a quarter at an inn, and dine together,—a part of us, I mean: and there, as the complaiſance of the company often gives me the chair, I preach civil and religious liberty, and often, when tea comes, theology,—not *points*, but general, and, I judge, uſeful truths."

When the ſubject of the ſlave trade was diſcuſſing,

cuſſing, it was impoſſible for Robinſon not to feel intereſted; he, accordingly, preached, and, in 1788, publiſhed on the occaſion; and, if I miſtake not, the firſt petition to the Houſe of Commons on this buſineſs was from Cambridge. It was drawn up by Robinſon, is admirably compoſed, and deſerves to be recorded in theſe memoirs.

"To the honourable the Commons of Great Britain in parliament aſſembled.

"The humble petition of the gentry, clergy, freeholders and others in the county of Cambridge, ſheweth,

"That your petitioners, underſtanding that the ſlave trade is likely to become a ſubject of parliamentary inveſtigation, cannot help expreſſing their moſt earneſt deſire of a change in the preſent ſyſtem of African trade.

"Your petitioners are aware, that Britain derives innumerable benefits from her plantations, and that the plantations depend upon the labours of negroes: but they are not convinced, that a ſlave trade is neceſſary to a ſupply of labourers. They abhor ſlavery in every form, and that kind moſt of all, which renders cruelty neceſſary to the ſafety of the ſlaveholders.

"Your petitioners humbly repreſent, that a ſlave trade is neither juſt, nor ſafe, nor, in the preſent caſe, productive; for it obſtructs other branches of traffic, which promiſe far greater national advantages.

"Nor can your petitioners help obſerving with ſorrow, that a ſlave trade is a diſhonour to humanity, a diſgrace to our national character, utterly inconſiſtent with the ſound policy of commercial ſtates, and a perpetual ſcandal to the profeſſion of Chriſtianity.

"Your petitioners, therefore, humbly pray this honourable houſe to take the premiſes into conſideration, and to grant ſuch relief as they in their great wiſdom ſhall ſee fit.

"And your petitioners, as in duty bound, ſhall ever pray."

The laſt humane project formed by Robinſon was a Charity-ſchool for boys and girls of proteſtant diſſenters, to be ſupported by ſubſcription. The ſchool was eſtabliſhed, but its duration was not long: ſubſcriptions ſoon failed, and the ſchool was diſcontinued. This charity, if I miſtake not, was ſet on foot in the year 1780.

Theſe

Theſe ſeveral ſchemes are comprehended in the ſame chapter, though formed at different periods; this arrangement appearing more conciſe and uniform.

The latter part of the year 1780 Robinſon ſpent in an agreeable tour into Scotland in company with his Trumpington friends, and one of his ſons. In his way he tarried ſome time at Oxford, to ſee what was curious in the univerſity, and to preach civil and religious liberty to a little ſociety of diſſenters, then forming themſelves into what is called *church order*: for their uſe, principally, he afterwards publiſhed a ſmall pamphlet entitled, "The General Doctrine of Toleration, applied to the particular caſe of Free Communion."

He likewiſe viſited his Berkſhire friends, particularly the congregation under the care of Daniel Turner, of Abingdon.

Having left Oxford, he no longer travelled in his miniſterial character: and the many entertaining letters, ſent to diſtinct branches of his family, relate more to the face of the country, the nature of the ſoil, manufactures, commerce, ſeats, caſtles, and natural curioſities, than to the cure of ſouls or the diſcipline of churches. He was now determined not to

make himſelf known to the diſſenting congregations in the towns through which he paſſed: having found, by his popularity, that it would have been impoſſible to proceed on his journey. He had preached to ſuch multitudes in the little meetings in Oxford and Abingdon, that he got violent colds. He accordingly aſſumed a leſs ſaintly garb, diſguiſing himſelf in light clothes,—white ſtockings,—ſcratch wig,—round beaver hat,—band and buckle.—The exterior appearance of the clerical character, and the concomitant title of "Reverend," Robinſon, at this period of his life, ſecretly conſidered as ridiculous: he, however, conformed to received cuſtoms and prejudices: though no one could lay aſide the manners of the prieſt with greater facility and addreſs.

If our limits would permit, we ſhould with pleaſure accompany him on this journey, and report from his letters various particulars, that would afford both pleaſure and inſtruction to our readers: but we ſhould be tempted to proceed further than would be conſiſtent with our leading deſign.

We ſhall, therefore, only obſerve, that, had we been writing for the amuſement of Dr. Johnſon, we ſhould certainly have tranſcribed Robinſon's Letters from Edinburgh: but that city

city is now conſiderably improved ; the letters likewiſe would be too long for this part of our narrative. We, therefore, only obſerve, in Robinſon's words, " that he and his company would have ſtaid longer at Edinburgh, if they could have been reconciled to naſtineſs."—He was, however, highly gratified with the civilities ſhewn him by ſome of the literati ; more particularly, by Dr. Robertſon the hiſtorian : he might have received the diploma of doctor in divinity ; but obſerved, afterwards, that " ſo many egregious dunces had been made D. D.s both at Engliſh as well as Scotch and American univerſities, that he declined the compliment."

CHAPTER XIV.

Robinſon's Character as a Farmer.

OUR readers have already been acquainted, that Robinſon came to Cheſterton in 1773. Here he at firſt hired, and in 1775 purchaſed a houſe. A conſiderable portion of his time had, for ſeveral years, been employed in repairs, and improvements.

In the autumn of the year 1775, he pulled down the back part of the houſe, it being in decay; and built a coal cellar, a kitchen, a pantry, a lower ſtore-room, a ſtaircaſe, and upper ſtore-room, a paſſage, and three chambers; ſome rooms he alſo floored, and repaired all the ſtaircaſe, an upper ſtore-room, a paſſage, and three chambers.

In 1776, he felled a good deal of timber in the cloſe, ſtubbing up, at the ſame time, the buſhes, cutting down the banks, filling up the ſwamps, and levelling the whole. He then planted two quicks, and ſeveral ſmall trees. After fencing, ditching, and manuring the field, he ſowed the ſward with graſs ſeed. On May the thirteenth of the ſame year, he was admitted

admitted at the lord's court to the ſaid copyhold eſtate, conſiſting of one tenement, with ſtables, barn, yard, orchard, three cow commons, &c. called by the name of the Roebuck; and of one cloſe of paſture called Sheep's cloſe, conſiſting of about an acre.

In the year 1779, by the conſent of the conſervators and the lord of the manor, he embanked, raiſed, levelled, fenced, and planted a mud-ſhoal, partly for a garden, partly for a graſs piece, and partly for a farm-yard: there alſo he built a bath, which was intended for a baptiſtery.

In the ſummer of the ſame year the old ſtable, barn, and waſh-houſe were pulled down, and, on the oppoſite ſide of the yard, were rebuilt. He now began to be much engaged with workmen, which was his great delight, and borrowed the language and manners of a farmer. This part of his hiſtory muſt not be hurried over too haſtily: his character derived much of its complexion from rural employments.

On the twentieth of May 1782, he purchaſed a farm called the Hand, held by leaſe of Trinity college, Cambridge. This conſiſted of a dwelling-houſe, one ſtable, two barns, two hog-ſtyes, a cart-lodge, a farm-yard, two gardens,

dens, a paddock, eighty acres, three roods and a half of arable land, ten cow-commons, ſummering ſix horſes, &c. On purchaſing the farm he pulled down the old dwelling-houſe, the ſtable, the hog-ſtyes, the barley-barn, and all the buildings except the wheat-barn. A new brick dwelling-houſe, a boarded ſtable, a cow-houſe, a cow-hoſpital, ſix cart-lodges, two hog-ſtyes, a hay-loft, a ſmall barley-barn, were built, and ten feet added to the wheat-barn, a new floor opened, and boarded ſides, two new pumps, fences, &c. added. The foundation of the houſe was laid July the firſt, and all was finiſhed by Michaelmas.

In the harveſt of the year 1782, he bought of alderman Purchaſe eighty-five acres, two roods of arable land; five acres of paſture, copy-hold; four houſes, copy-hold: the conveyances are dated October 30, 1782: theſe eſtates were let to ſeveral tenants. He however retained two houſes, together with land, &c. ſo that he had ſufficient land to employ him as a farmer; his ſituation near the river Cam was favourable alſo to the buſineſs of a merchant: a barn, therefore, he turned into a coal-ſhed; and traded both in coals and corn.

Robinſon we muſt now conſider as a man of buſineſs, and, indeed, of property: but, how he thus ſuddenly became poſſeſſed of ſufficient property.

perty to make theſe purchaſes, and expenſive repairs, may not be obvious: that he did not acquire it by public preaching, is certain. His ſalary could not even equal the wants of his numerous family.

To a mere impertinent inquiſitiveneſs little reſpect is due; but it becomes the duty of a biographer to prevent unwarrantable concluſions, and to meet illiberal objections. All therefore of Robinſon's affairs that I actually know, or conjecture by inference, ſhall be laid before the reader.—For this property he was partly indebted to his own literary labours, partly to the gratuitous civilities of private friendſhip.

For his Arcana, printed in 1774, he received twenty guineas. In 1775, two volumes of Saurin's Sermons were publiſhed by ſubſcription. They were productive, but to what amount, I know not. In 1777, a third volume of Saurin's Sermons appeared. During the delay of publiſhing the fourth volume of Saurin's Sermons, Claude's Eſſay made its appearance: for this he received 400l. For his Political Catechiſm, publiſhed in 1782, he received twenty guineas.

To other perſons, he had been occaſionally indebted,

indebted, as appears from letters; but his friends at Trumpington were his moſt liberal patroneſſes: while they concealed with all the reſerve of delicacy their liberality, and guarded againſt thoſe impertinences, which characteriſe vulgar minds, their friendſhip was, I had like to have ſaid, profuſe. With them Robinſon lived on terms of the greateſt intimacy, attached to them no leſs for their ſuperiour underſtanding and goodneſs, than for their perſonal kindneſſes. And let it not be reckoned out of character, if I take this opportunity of expreſſing my obligations to them during this period.

It, however, may not be improper to notice, that Robinſon's judgement had in the eſtimation of theſe perſons its value, as well as his friendſhip; and they conſidered themſelves indebted to him, as well for his general attention to their intereſt when at Trumpington, as for ſecuring to them a conſiderable ſum of money, which they had been in danger of loſing.

On the production of the other works of Robinſon, it is unneceſſary to dwell. The above were the original ſources of the property that he poſſeſſed; and his good ſenſe enabled him to make profitable purchaſes.

That a miniſter of the goſpel ſhould thus devote

vote himſelf to mercantile employments, was by many of his Chriſtian brethren conſtrued to his diſadvantage. But all illiberal imputations he ſubmitted to without difficulty: and the only notice they received from Robinſon were ſmiles at their impertinence. "Godly boobies," he would ſay, "too idle, many of them, to work, too ignorant to give inſtruction, and too conceited to ſtudy, ſpending all their time in tattling and miſchief,—are theſe the men to direct my conduct, to cenſure my induſtry?" His ſentiments concerning ſuch reverend buſy-bodies may be collected from the following letter written to a worthy miniſter, Thomas Dunſcombe of Bampton, Oxfordſhire.

"*Cheſterton, November* 14, 1785.

"DEAR SIR,

"I own it gives me a great deal of pleaſure to ſee any of the miniſters of our churches addreſs themſelves to honeſt employments in life; there are many reaſons to induce us to do ſo. Idleneſs is abominable, and the pretence of ſtudy is a joke, where a man hath not more books than he can read over in a month. Beſides, what is there to find out? A catholic had need be a ſubtle dog, and furniſhed with all the lore of the ſchools, to make the New Teſtament ſpeak in favour of his church: but a baptiſt, whoſe whole religion lies in believing a few

a few plain facts, and in imitating that very plain example, Jeſus Chriſt,—what hath he to do to rack his invention, and to aſſemble all apologies, ancient and modern, to juſtify him for doing ſo? Oh! but there are ſome beautiful readings, and fine criticiſms, and ſtrokes of oratory, which deſerve the ſtudy of a miniſter of Chriſt! Well, God forgive me, poor ſinner that I am! I feel three pounds, gained honeſtly by the ſale of a fat bullock, produce more fire in my ſpirit, than all thoſe pretty, but poor taſſels and ſpangles, can give me. With three pounds I can ſet fire to ten cold hearts frozen with infirmity and widowhood, poverty and fear. Half a guinea will purchaſe the native eloquence of a grateful old woman: and ſhe, if I ſet her to read, will give me a criticiſm of the heart, and the fineſt reading in the world. Oh! bleſs the old ſoul! what honied accents ſhe pours into my ear! If I can honeſtly get, and afford to give away three pounds, it will always be my own fault, if I be not very happy. Now then ſet me to preach. How is it poſſible I ſhould be dull! The luxury of living to the glory of God, and the good of ſociety; the joy of having ſaved a forlorn and forgotten cripple from hanging herſelf in deſpair; the felicity of ſetting fire to incenſe that burns to the glory of God; theſe are preparations for the pulpit, which the cold conſumer of midnight oil never

derives

derives from his accents and quantities. I was the other night in our veſtry with ſeveral gownſmen juſt before the lecture. In comes one of my ſiſter Abigails. "How do you do, Sarah? I am glad to ſee you returned ſafe from viſiting your family at Soham."—"Bleſs the Lord, Sir, I am. We heard Mr. Watts on the Lord's day, and were very much edified indeed! But the day after we were coming out of town, my huſband ſaw him—and poor creature, 'he was ſo ſhocked".—O Sir—thunderſtruck at all this, I trembled, expecting to hear before the gown, that my poor brother Watt was ſeen drunk, or ſome ſuch thing. Lord, thought I, happy is that man who hath not a fooliſh babbling good woman in his congregation. I looked pale. Sarah went on, "O Sir, there was the poor man on the top of a ladder a thatching a rick." I laughed, but ſtamped, and ſaid, "Have I beſtowed ſo much inſtruction upon you and your huſband for nothing? Are you yet in a ſtate of infancy? I honour the man, and muſt be acquainted with him." "Dear Sir, he works five days, and has only Saturday to ſtudy."—"Well, Sarah, I ſhall try to convince him, that he ought to work ſix days: for one day will never make him a ſcholar, and his people are only a ſet of turf-diggers: and fourteen pence more in his pocket every Lord's day, will make him preach with more vigour, and

rattle

rattle the goſpel with more power into the turf-men's ſouls. I appeal to theſe learned gentlemen." After all, the prejudices of the common people are very great againſt the ſecular employments of miniſters; and while we purſue them, we ſhould take care, and not give any unneceſſary offence. This laſt ſeed-time I was in the field along with a young gentleman who looks after my farm, and he was digging a water-furrow acroſs a land. It was a ſtrong clayey ſoil, and he groaned, ſo that in pity I took the ſpade and went into the ditch, which was very dauby, and preſently groaned too, at which he fell a laughing.—What do you laugh at? "Pardon me, Sir: I recollected that a miniſter lately ſaid in his ſermon, that preaching was the hardeſt work that was done under the ſun." I wiſh the fool was in this ditch: he would ſoon learn that ſome of his authors had taught him to tell fibs. Farewell, my moſt affectionate friend; induſtry, plenty, frugality, proſperity, generoſity, and piety be with you. Amen.

"Yours ever,

"Robert Robinson."

It muſt not, however, be inferred, that Robinſon's agricultural and commercial engagements deſtroyed his taſte for literature, or that his attention to labourers and farmers interrupted

rupted his intercourſe with men of letters. His correſpondents throughout England, Scotland, and Wales, were numerous and reſpectable; and the applications made to him to ſettle differences, and to arbitrate difficult caſes, (for he became a kind of chamber-council to many diſſenting congregations) were ſtill very conſiderable. A valuable domeſtic, indeed, afterwards united to him by filial attachment, William Curtis, exonerated him of many caſes, both in buſineſs and in the field, and rendered him eſſential ſervice as an amanuenſis.

The following letter, though written at a later period, will be a-propos to the preſent chapter.

" *Cheſterton, May* 26, 1784.

" Old Friend,

" You love I ſhould write folios: that depends upon circumſtances, and if the thunderſtorm laſts, it will be ſo: but what a ſad thing it is to be forced to write, when one has nothing to ſay? Well, you ſhall have an apology for not writing,—that is, a diary of one day.

" Roſe at three o'clock—crawled into the library—and met one who ſaid, " Yet a little while is the light with you: walk while ye have the light—the night cometh, when no man can work—my father worketh hitherto,

and I work."—Rang the great bell, and rouſed the girls to milking—went up to the farm, rouſed the horſe-keeper—fed the horſes while he was getting up—called the boy to ſuckle the calves, and clean out the cow-houſe—lighted the pipe, walked round the gardens to ſee what was wanting there—went up the paddock to ſee if the weanling calves were well—went down to the ferry, to ſee whether the boy had ſcooped and cleaned the boats—returned to the farm—examined the ſhoulders, heels, traces, chaff, and corn of eight horſes going to plough—mended the acre ſtaff—cut ſome thongs, whip-corded the boys' plough whips—pumped the troughs full—ſaw the hogs fed—examined the ſwill-tubs, and then the cellar—ordered a quarter of malt, for the hogs want grains, and the men want beer—filled the pipe again, returned to the river, and bought a lighter of turf for dairy-fires, and another of ſedge for ovens—hunted up the wheelbarrows, and ſet them a trundling—returned to the farm, called the men to breakfaſt, and cut the boys bread and cheeſe, and ſaw the wooden bottles filled—ſent one plough to the three-roods, another to the three-half-acres, and ſo on—ſhut the gates, and the clock ſtruck five—breakfaſted—ſet two men to ditch the five roods—two more to chop ſads, and ſpread about the land—two more to

throw up muck in the yard—and three men and ſix women to weed wheat—ſet on the carpenter to repair cow-cribs, and ſet them up till winter—the wheeler to mend up the old carts, cart-ladders, rakes, &c. preparatory to hay-time and harveſt—walked to the ſix-acres, found hogs in the graſs—went back, and ſent a man to hedge and thorn—ſold the butcher a fat calf, and the ſuckler a lean one—the clock ſtrikes nine—walked into barley-field—barleys fine, picked off a few tiles and ſtones, and cut a few thiſtles—the peas fine, but foul; the charlock muſt be topped—the tares doubtful; the fly ſeems to have taken them—prayed for rain, but could not ſee a cloud—came round to the wheat-field—wheats rather thin, but the fineſt colour in the world—ſent four women on to the ſhorteſt wheats—ordered one man to weed the ridge of the long wheats—and two women to keep rank and file with him in the furrows—thiſtles many—blue-bottles no end—traverſed all the wheat-field—came to the fallow field—the ditchers have run crooked—ſet them ſtraight—the flag-ſads cut too much, ruſhſads too little, ſtrength waſted, ſhew the men how to three-corner them—laid out more work for the ditchers—went to the ploughs—ſet the foot a little higher, cut a wedge, ſet the coulter deeper, muſt go and get a new mould-board againſt to-morrow—went to the other plough—

picked up ſome wool, and tyed over the traces —mended a horſe-tree, tyed a thong to the plough-hammer—went to ſee which lands wanted ploughing firſt—ſat down under a buſh —wondered how any man could be ſo ſilly as to call me *reverend*—read two verſes, and thought of his loving kindneſs in the midſt of his temple—gave out, " Come all harmonious tongues," and ſet mount Ephraim tune—roſe up—whiſtled—the dogs wagged their tails, and on we went—got home—dinner ready—filled the pipe—drank ſome milk—and fell aſleep— woke by the carpenter for ſome flats, which the ſawyer muſt cut—the Reverend Meſſrs A. in a coat, B. in a gown of black, and C. in one of purple, came to drink tea, and to ſettle, whether Gomer was the father of the Celts and Gauls and Britons, or only the uncle— proof ſheet from Mr. Archdeacon—corrected it—waſhed—dreſſed—went to meeting, and preached from, *the end of all things is at hand, be ye ſober and watch unto prayer*—found a dear brother *reverence* there, who went home with me, and edified us all out of Solomon's ſong, with a diſh of tripe out of Leviticus, and a golden candleſtick out of Exodus.—Really and truly we look for you and Mrs. Keene and Mr. Dore at harveſt; and if you do not come, I know what you all are.—Let Mr. Winch go

where

where he can better himſelf. Is not this a folio? And like many other folios? . . . . . .

"R. ROBINSON."

"HENRY KEENE, ESQ."

The intelligent reader will perceive, that one object of the preceding letter, is, to rally uſeleſs prieſts, idle and unprofitable profeſſors of religion, and pompous ſcribblers about nothing, "fruges conſumere natos," men who ſeem only born to devour the fruits of the earth:—an honeſt, induſtrious day-labourer may be worth a ſcore of ſuch men.

CHAPTER XV.

Robinſon's Engagement to write the Hiſtory of the Baptiſts: his Character, as a Politician.

IN the year 1781, the baptiſts, lamenting that they had no authentic hiſtory of the Engliſh baptiſts, invited Robinſon to collect materials and to execute the work. He received at the ſame time offers of acceſs to the Britiſh Muſeum: and Dr. Gifford, who, as obſerved before, was a baptiſt, and one of the librarians, being advanced in age, it became neceſſary, that the performance ſhould be undertaken without delay.

Some of the baptiſts, therefore, reſiding in London, aſſociated on this occaſion, and formed a committee, at which Dr. Gifford preſided: when the following reſolutions were adopted: "At a meeting at the King's head in the Poultry, November 6, 1781,—preſent, reverend Dr. Gifford in the chair, reverend Meſſrs. Ebenezer Smith, Samuel Rolls, Timothy Thomas, Henry Keene eſquire, Meſſrs. John Middleton, William Savill, Richard Lloyd, Robert Weſtley, Joſeph Hughes, Thomas Pownall, Iſaac Cotham, Benjamin Staley, William Sabine,

1. Reſolved,

1. Reſolved, that a new hiſtory of the baptiſts is a work much to be deſired.—2. That the Reverend R. Robinſon, of Cheſterton, is a proper perſon to be invited to execute that work; the Reverend Dr. Gifford generouſly offering him an apartment in his houſe, for the inſpection of manuſcripts in the Muſeum, and every other aſſiſtance in his power.—3. Reſolved, that the Reverend Mr. Robinſon be requeſted to come up to London, early in the week before the ſecond Lord's day in every month, and ſtay till the latter end of the following week, for the purpoſe of collecting materials for the ſaid work; alſo, that Mr. Robinſon be requeſted to preach the Lectures in London, every journey; and that the Lectures be holden at different places, viz. at Dr. Gifford's, the ſecond Lord's day evening, and at Rev. Mr. Rippon's, on the Tueſdays before and after, at the uſual times of their Lectures.—4. Dr. Gifford conſenting to invite Mr. Robinſon to preach the ſaid Lectures at his place, reſolved, that Mr. Keene and Mr. Weſtley be appointed to give an invitation to Mr. Robinſon to preach the ſaid Lectures at his place.—5. That perſons be invited to ſubſcribe to the ſaid Lectures, in order to defray the expenſes of Mr. Robinſon's journies.—6. That Mr. Robinſon be paid five guineas every journey by the treaſurer, to be appointed, and the overplus (if any) at the end

of the year.—7. That Mr. Middleton be appointed treaſurer.—8. That Mr. Keene be appointed to apply to Mr. Robinſon, and his church, for their conſent to the above, and to fix the commencement of the Lectures.—9. That Mr. Keene and Mr. Middleton be appointed to conduct the buſineſs.

Accordingly Keene wrote to Robinſon, and the church, at Cambridge.

This requeſt of the London-committee gave, at firſt, much diſquiet to the church at Cambridge; who were ſo charmed with their paſtor's appearance in the pulpit, that they could ſcarcely endure any body elſe. They entertained apprehenſions, indeed, that Robinſon's popular talents would invite too much admiration, and that the rich diſſenters in London would hold out allurements to ſeduce him from Cambridge. Having, however, conſidered the matter in every point of view, it was, at length, agreed at a church-meeting, held at Cambridge, 1781, to comply with the requeſt of the London-baptiſts.

The following anſwer, written by William Naſh, chairman of the Cambridge-committee, and one of the deacons of the church, an upright and well-informed man, ſhews the eſteem

in

in which the paſtor was held by this Chriſtian ſociety: it cannot but pleaſe many readers.

"Your third reſolution, which ſeemed more materially to affect the church, very naturally produced conſiderable difficulties; and many ſuſpicions aroſe in the minds of ſome of our brethren, leſt the execution of the taſk that our beloved paſtor is ſo warmly ſolicited to undertake, ſhould lead him into temptations to deſert a people that are not ignorant of his value; and, I believe, nothing would have induced an unanimous vote in the church, for his abſence one Lord's day in a month, for a year, (and, perhaps, for a longer time) but the ſtrict injunctions, I may ſay poſitive commands, impoſed upon me to ſubjoin to this their conſent the obtaining of a promiſe that your committee will deal with the church, in ſtrict Chriſtian faithfulneſs;—that you will neither directly, nor indirectly, promote any plan or ſcheme, that ſhall eventually tend to remove our paſtor from us; nor yet to alter the plan, at preſent propoſed, (either in the preſent, or any future year, if the work to be undertaken ſhould require it) whereby our paſtor ſhall be from us more than one Lord's day in a month."

The committee in London appointed Keene to convey thanks for this compliance, and to aſſure

ſure them, in the ſtrongeſt terms, that they would act on principles of the ſtricteſt honour. Robinſon, accordingly, came at the appointed time to collect materials for his hiſtory, and preached occaſional lectures, agreeably to the propoſal.

He was now entering on a new theatre. His talents as a writer had been long acknowledged, though in London he was little known as a preacher. His lectures ſoon became popular; the meetings where he appeared, uncommonly crowded: and his preaching being uſually on queſtions concerning liberty and religious moderation, he eaſily conciliated the more liberal of all parties among the diſſenters.

But how ſhort-lived is popular admiration! Robinſon's mode of public preaching in London was thought, by many of his own party, calculated rather to make men doubt, than believe;—to inquire, rather than convince; his eloquence rather faſcinating than ſolid; his hearers were rarely addreſſed on thoſe points of doctrine, from whence they derived their comfort; and the orthodoxy of the preacher became ſuſpected. Unfortunately, too, in a pamphlet publiſhed about this time, he defended the "Innocence of mere Mental Error," meaning, that men may hold miſtaken notions concerning religion, without that guilt which

which proceeds from a depraved heart. The doctrine was readily embraced by many of his more curious hearers, but the greater part were alarmed. They aſſerted, that truth was not only important, but eſſential to ſalvation. Of Calviniſm they would not abate a ſingle article; and though Robinſon profeſſed himſelf a moderate Calviniſt, they thought him an unſound man, wavering between the doctrines of Arius and Socinus.

Robinſon now attended, occaſionally, at the Muſeum, in order to collect materials for his hiſtory, but found not ſo much ſatisfaction on the ſubjects he wiſhed to inveſtigate, as he expected: beſides, preaching and viſiting were unforeſeen interruptions to his purſuits.

How little leiſure he was likely to find to examine manuſcripts, and to collect hiſtorical materials, ſuch at leaſt, as he required, may be inferred from an extract of a letter from his eſteemed friend, Henry Keene.

" As in your favour of the 26th of March, you deſired me to adjuſt your preaching times, with the approbation of your friends, they are as follow:

Tueſday evening, April 15, at Mr. Rippon's.

Thurſday

Thurſday morning, —— 17, at Dr. Stafford's.
Lord's day morning, —— 20, — Dr. Rees'.
———— afternoon, ———— Maze Pond.
———— evening, ———— Little St. Helen's.
Monday evening, —— 21, — Maze Pond Veſtry.
Tueſday evening, —— 22, — Mr. Rippon's.
Wedneſday morning, —— 23, — Maze Pond.

and afterwards to dine with your friends, at the Grove-Houſe, Lambeth.

His deſign, therefore, in coming to London, was eventually defeated; and in order to proceed in his hiſtory, he was obliged to retire into the country. He had, however, formed a ſcheme, the completion of which required but a ſeparation from thoſe interruptions attendant on popularity, and the free uſe of public libraries;—and after all, Cheſterton afforded him a far more agreeable retreat, and better accommodations than London; for he had not only obtained, through the kindneſs of ſome maſters of arts in the univerſity, free acceſs to that invaluable treaſure of literature contained in the public library, but the liberty of having any books conveyed to his houſe that he wiſhed.

The perſons to whom Robinſon principally acknowledged himſelf indebted for theſe great advantages, it would afford me pleaſure to enumerate:

merate: but ſome of them I know not, and of others more particular mention will be made hereafter, as men of enlarged minds, and of benevolent hearts. None have a title to the advantages of the public library but academics. Theſe circumſtances are mentioned, becauſe Robinſon was a diſſenter, and the uſe of the library was to him very great; and becauſe Robinſon always felt with reſpect, and acknowledged with gratitude, his obligations. From the noiſe of the great city,—from the obtruſion of exceſſive admiration,—from idle flattery, and frequent mortifications, he yielded to the retirement of a village, and the groves of Academus; his plans were formed anew, and a determination made of publiſhing his work by ſubſcription. This hiſtory was the work of a great many years of cloſe application, and was not publiſhed till the year 1790. We, therefore, paſs for the preſent to another ſubject.

There exiſts a claſs of lofty politicians, by whom government is treated, as prieſts treat religion, like a ſcience too profound to be fathomed by common intellects, or like a fabric too elegant, and too ſacred to be touched by the unclean, the unhallowed hands of the vulgar. The comprehenſion of political ſcience, the arrangement and eſtabliſhment of political

inſtitutions, are, according to theſe men, appointed by a divine inviſible agent, and tranſferred to the adminiſtration of a tranſcendent perſonage, his vicegerent in this lower world. To augment the ſplendour of this auguſt character, inferiour dignities are called in, encloſed with the bright emblazonry of hereditary greatneſs, and decorated with the exteriour pomp of official magnificence. Theſe ſagacious ſpeculatiſts, like the ancient Epicureans, who maintained, that the liberty of the will flows from a right line out of a curve, reverſe the intereſts and claims of a community; and become advocates for the crooked manœuvrings of a few lucky ſpirits, fortunate by birth, or bleſt with affluence. In compariſon with theſe politicians, how mere a novice was Ariſtotle! This philoſopher did but reſign the reins of government to ſuch as nature had endowed with talents, correſponding to the character of a governor *. The other men poſſeſſed the *holy oil*, by which even fools were made Solomons. The doctrine of Jus Divinum eſtabliſhed tyranny and ſlavery by a commiſſion from heaven †.

In the beſt political writers of the laſt cen-

* Ariſtot. de Repub. l. i. c. 4.

† Sir Robert Filmer, in his Patriarcha; ſee Locke's Diſcourſes on Government.

tury,

tury, Harrington, Milton, Sidney, Penn, and Locke, the frivolous and pernicious preſcriptions of political empirics have been expoſed with ingenuity and learning. In their valuable writings we trace the luminous and ſalutary parts of ancient and modern theories: the genuine principles of liberty are conſpicuous throughout: ſuppoſing, that the Engliſh form of government preſerved theſe principles ſacred, they became its zealous defenders, not as lately adminiſtered by defiled hands, but as ſeen in the purer days of the ancient Saxons *.

The writers, who, for ſeveral years paſt, have been admired by Engliſh politicians, are Monteſquieu and Blackſtone. The Spirit of Laws, and the Commentaries on the Laws of England, unfold the principles of liberty; they diſplay the Engliſh conſtitution, as a model, exhibiting thoſe principles in perfection. What have theſe writers performed? The one raiſed doubts, whether this beautiful theory was ever ſeen in practice: the other produced ſuch ſtriking inſtances of partiality and imbecillity,

* Sidney's Diſcourſes on Government, c. iii. § xxvii. xxviii. Hollis's edition, and Miltoni pro Pop. Ang. Def. cap. viii.

as

as demonſtrate, that, ſo far as ſeen in practice, it was far from perfection*.

Governments, of late years, have been approached with leſs confidential deference, and ſanctimonious regard. How far they may be pronounced poſitive bleſſings, has been doubted by ſome†: and Thomas Paine's definition has not paſſed without numerous admirers: "Government," ſays he, "is an evil, that the wickedneſs of mankind renders neceſſary‡." Whether Plato, Ariſtotle, or Cicero, afford a more accurate definition, may be queſtioned. Robinſon's is juſt and ingenious. "It is the ſentinel," ſays he, "which watches, that the public labours be not diſturbed §."

In the year 1782, Robinſon publiſhed a Political Catechiſm. A remark or two ſhall be made on this work: it proceeds on Engliſh conſtitutional principles.

In a writer, who, with a clearer inſight into the intereſts of civil ſociety, than moſt men,

* "It is not my buſineſs," ſays Monteſquieu, "to inquire, whether the Engliſh actually enjoy this liberty or not." Eſprit des Loix.

† Godwin's Political Juſtice.

‡ Thomas Paine's Rights of Man.

§ Robinſon's Political Catechiſm.

poſſeſſed

poſſeſſed the pureſt motives, is the following judicious obſervation: " Great advantage would be derived to the community, were our fellow citizens, of the lower claſſes, properly inſtructed in the juſt and conſtitutional meaning of ſuch terms as the following: Majeſty, Subject, Sovereign, Republic, Loyalty, Allegiance, Rebellion, Treaſon, Prerogative, King's bread, King's armies, my People, &c. We never can expect to behold a proper exertion of the natural good ſenſe, and ſpirit of the nation, until the underſtandings, and affections of all orders of men are emancipated from the influence of the falſe ideas, which ignorance, or the art of deſigning politicians, has annexed to theſe expreſſions *."

At a public meeting in London, where Jebb preſided, Robinſon heard a ſimilar remark; and, in conſequence, produced his excellent little dialogue, entitled, A Political Catechiſm, publiſhed in 1782. A parent is here introduced, catechiſing his ſon on ſubjects contained in the following words:—Myſteriouſneſs,—Conſtitution,—Adminiſtration,—Repreſentation,—Taxation,—Reſponſibility,—Generaliſſimo,—Aggrandiſement,—Emigration.

* A Letter to the Chairman of the Meeting of the Freeholders of Middleſex.

The pamphlet proceeds on theſe beautiful principles:——

" *P.* Indeed I do not ſpeak the language of affection; I proteſt, it is the cool voice of my reaſon. Government, as well as every other ſcience, beheld in the groſs, reſembles a loaded fruit-tree in autumn; but, as all the fruits, and foliage, and ramifications of the one, ſo all the departments of the other, may be reduced to firſt principles; and theſe comprehended, the whole is underſtood.

" *G.* Then, ſir, in ten days I ſhall be able to govern a kingdom.

" *P.* No ſuch thing—you muſt diſtinguiſh between theory and practice. Theſe ſubjects are general principles, abſolutely neceſſary to practice; but caſes and circumſtances occur in practice, which require preſent perſonal genius and dexterity, in the uſe and application of theſe principles."

The Catechiſm, therefore, unfolds the theory and practice of government. The firſt word, *myſterioufneſs*, as applied to government, is unravelled in a manner truly ingenious and original.—This is an admirable pamphlet on Engliſh conſtitutional principles, for the inſtruction of

young politicians. Two words only ſhall be remarked on, as ſufficient to delineate our author's political character. Theſe are—Conſtitution and Repreſentation.

The youth is introduced, ſaying—

" *G.* I have dipped into Judge Blackſtone's Commentaries, and I find in one place he calls King, Lords, and Commons, the Britiſh Conſtitution, and in another he ſays, Members of Parliament are guardians of the Conſtitution."

The parent ſays,—" Diſtinguiſh between government and governors, and you will perceive both his expreſſions are right."

Again, Conſtitution is defined—" The act of making ſomething what it is, and that ſomething is made law, underſtanding by it rule of action, regulation of rights, or civil government; and, " ſuppoſe," ſays the parent, " I were to affirm, that the municipal law of Great Britain is conſtituted, or made up of juſt and virtuous political principles, principles conformable to thoſe of the eternal, immutable, and infallible law of nature; would that elucidate the ſubject?"

The definition is ingenious.

It is remarkable, that amidſt the political diſcuſſions lately agitated in France, the name of Monteſquieu, long reckoned the firſt political writer in Europe, was ſcarcely noticed. Whence happened this ſingular circumſtance? A hint already dropped will furniſh a ready anſwer. The great excellence of the Engliſh Conſtitution conſiſts in its repreſentative character: when politicians fall into raptures on ſurveying the Engliſh Conſtitution, what is it that excites this enthuſiaſtic admiration? Hear Robinſon—

" *P.* When we ſpeak of adminiſtration, George, we ſpeak of what *is*; but when we ſpeak of repreſentation, we ſpeak of what *ought to be.*

" *G.* Would not annual parliaments, and equal repreſentation, put it abſolutely out of the power of the whole world to deſtroy the independence of parliament?

" *G.* It ſhould ſeem ſo; at leaſt, it is worth trying; but have we a right to theſe?

" *P.* We have both a natural, and conſtitutional right to theſe. Septennial parliaments

are

are of late date, triennial are not much older, and it was no longer ago, than the reign of Henry the ſixth, that the people at large were deprived of this right, and the qualification of electors for knights of the ſhire, determined to be the owning of a freehold of the value of forty ſhillings a year, which, by the way, was then equivalent to twenty pounds of preſent value."

Then follows " A ſcheme of the proportion the ſeveral counties in England paid to the land tax, in 1693, and to the ſubſidies, in 1697, compared with the number of members they ſend to parliament,"

Robinſon continues—" In this ſcheme the proportions are thus conſidered, viz. That as the whole kingdom ſends 513 members to parliament; ſo the whole of each tax is divided into 513 equal parts; and, the firſt column ſhewing the name of the county—the ſecond ſhews how many of the 513 parts each county paid to the land tax in 1693—the third, how many of the 513 parts each county paid to the ſubſidies in 1697,—and the fourth, how many of the 513 members each county ſends to parliament.

" It appears that Middleſex, which paid 80

parts of the tax, and 185 of the ſubſidy, ſent only eight members to parliament; and Cornwall, which paid only eight parts of the tax, and five of the ſubſidy, ſent 44. Is this proportional?

" *G.* No ſurely.

" *P.* There is a worſe article than this in the preſent management. Canvaſſing, carouzing, intoxication, bribery, perjury, and all the uſual attendants on a modern election, diſgrace candidates, and deſtroy all confidence in them, and, at the ſame time, deprave and debauch the morals of the whole community. In the democratical part of our conſtitution, there is an exerciſe of ſovereignty by ſuffrage: but never was the majeſty of democracy ſo debaſed as it is in ſome elections. Candidates loſe all reverence for the people, their conſtituents; and the people, all that reſpect and reverence for repreſentatives, which men in ſuch high truſt ſhould always retain.

" *G.* The means being thus ineffectual, the end of repreſentation is not anſwered.—Is that your meaning, ſir?

" *P.* Yes, verily. Why is democracy interwoven in our conſtitution with ariſtocracy and monarchy?

monarchy? Is it not for the ſake of its political virtue? And, if it ceaſes to be virtuous, will it not yield to the frictions of wiſdom and power eſſential to the other two parts? In ſuch a caſe, is not the very exiſtence of our conſtitution in danger, and ought not all poſſible remedies to be applied? It would be as abſurd to deprive the crown of power and the nobles of conſultation, as it would be to defraud the people of virtue; I mean all along political virtue, the people's thorough knowledge, juſt eſtimation, and actual diſpoſal, by unbiaſſed ſuffrage, of their lives, liberties, and properties, and all their natural rights."

Repreſentation, on theſe principles, in the preſent ſtate of Engliſh politics, is a flattering word; but it is "vox, et præterea nihil, a mere empty ſound."

There are many perſons, though much inclined to long fits of admiration, who can ſurvey ſuch a model with all the coldneſs of indifference, or, at furtheſt, with the irritations of diſappointed pride. For, what is here exhibited to view? The majeſty of the people is conceded to the dignity of the civil magiſtrate. In one part of the political ſyſtem is conceived to exiſt ubiquity, omnipotence, ſupreme wiſdom, and ſupreme power: the being,

from education, and ſituation, moſt liable to miſtake, is rendered infallible,—is even placed beyond the reach of reform, by being made irreſponſible.

Monteſquieu, then, might very reaſonably raiſe doubts, and the French might conſider him only a theoriſt*.

People may be complimented with the title of free-men, without the power of making laws, or controul over the legiſlators. Do they complain of grievances? Do they aſſert their rights? They may feel an influence that ſports with their diſtreſſes, inſults their pride, and over-rules every claim.

Engliſh politicians, lament over the ſpirit of departed greatneſs! Recall the golden days of the illuſtrious Alfred! Maintain, that if Engliſhmen enjoy not freedom, yet they ought to be free! That, if they poſſeſs not the perfection of a repreſentative government, yet they have a conſtitutional claim to annual parliaments, and to univerſal ſuffrage. Aſſert, they have a right to bear arms, and to defend their liberties! That, if the military power inſult the ſacred character of a citizen,

* See David Williams's Lectures on Poltical Principles.

ſuch

ſuch act is treaſon againſt the conſtitution! Determine the epoch of their conſtitution, and reaſon from its original fundamental principles. If one period ſhould be too remote, or too recent, place their model at leaſt in a ſituation, where we may behold its glory. Should a taunting miniſter, after all, propoſe the queſtion, Have they the power to be free? their reply is, "Liberty is the Engliſhman's birth-right *."

Human ſyſtems, how ſplendid, yet how viſionary!—Theories too delicate to be touched, too beautiful to be realiſed!—Whoſe very perfection engenders imperfection!—Whoſe integrity requires conſtant watching!—Whoſe powers are making continual encroachments, and require continual reſtraints.

Robinſon was a politician of the firſt character. The Engliſh form of government he approved; and he admired king Log.

Among our author's correſpondents up to the

* The intelligent reader will perceive, that, in the above paragraph, truth is not to be attached to every clauſe. Some curious particulars, and more might be added, may be ſeen in a very old book, "The Mirrour of Juſtices," ch. i. ſect. iii. Of the firſt conſtitutions made by the ancient kings: and in ch. v. ſect. ii. Of the defects of the Great Charter: and in ſect. iv. v. vi. of the ſame chapter.

preſent period, are, beſides others already mentioned, the following:—Abraham Atkins, of Clapham;—Joſeph Beatſon, of Hull;—Dr. Stennett;—S. Rowles, a diſſenting miniſter, in Rotherhithe Road;—Mary Hays, a woman of conſiderable literary merit;—John Hobſon, then a ſtudent of Homerton academy, afterwards an independent miniſter, at Birmingham:—John Stanger, a baptiſt miniſter of Beſſel-Green, near Sevenoaks;—Henry Keene, of Walworth;—James Dore, a baptiſt miniſter, of Maze-Pond, Southwark;—E. Middleton, a clergyman of the eſtabliſhed church;—Joſeph Middleton, of Lewes;—Charles Edward De Coetlogon, chaplain of the Lock hoſpital;—John Rogers, late a diſſenting miniſter, in Long-lane, Southwark;—John Kimpton, of Queen's-ſquare, Bartholomew-cloſe;—J. Landys;—J. Wright, of Ipſwich;—T. Sockett, of London.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XVI.

An Account of the Regium Donum Penſion conferred on the Diſſenters.

MENTION has been made more than once of Dr. Stennett, a name well known among the diſſenters, and for many years in great eſtimation with the baptiſts. An agreeable, rather than a popular preacher, poſſeſſed of a good fortune, diſtinguiſhed by gracious manners, and connected, beyond any of his brethren, with the higher circles, Dr. Stennett, the laſt of that name, gained a conſiderable ſhare of reputation among the moderately orthodox of moſt parties *.

He became acquainted with Robinſon, in 1776, or in 1777, and, by introducing him to ſome highly valued friends, had rendered him eſſential ſervices. The only letter, however, from Dr. Stennett, among Robinſon's papers, is the following:—

* See a Sermon on occaſion of Dr. Stennett's death, by Daniel Turner, M. A.

" *London,*

" *London, Monday, Aug.* 26, 1782.

" DEAR SIR,

" You may poſſibly remember, that ſome time, I think the latter end, of the year before laſt, you drew on me, at my deſire, for ten guineas. The ſending me a receipt was a circumſtance, that eſcaped you. Will you be ſo good as forgive my putting you to the trouble of ſending me one, as there is a chain in my accounts, which I wiſh to make up thereby. It will particularly oblige me, if you can let me have it in the courſe of this week. It ſhould run thus:—*being a donation entruſted to his diſpoſal.*

" Reverend Sir,

" Your Obedient Humble Servant,

" SAMUEL STENNETT."

How extraordinary is this! thought I. Surely, between perſons circumſtanced as theſe were, baptiſts, controverſialiſts, and friends, there muſt have paſſed ſomething more of epiſtolary intercourſe. Be this as it may, a breach was made in their friendſhip, that was never cloſed; Stennett, on the one hand, might, perhaps, think that Robinſon treated the miniſterial character with too much levity, and held theological opinions with too much indifference; was envious at ſuperiour talents, or hurt by Robinſon's

ſon's violent attack on the biſhops; or, on the other, Robinſon might conceive, that Stennett required too much deference; was too courtly among the higher powers, and too complying, for a diſſenting miniſter. Whatever was the immediate, or remote cauſe of this rupture, it ſeems proper to notice this letter as leading to a ſubject of ſome conſequence to the diſſenters. The receipt ſolicited above, was for a ſum of money, a portion of what is called Regium Donum.

Dr. Stennett, for ſeveral years, took the lead among the diſſenters in the diſtribution of this royal bounty, which was a donation beſtowed by majeſty on the diſſenting body, of which a ſhort account here follows, written by a doctor among the diſſenters, and extracted from the London Magazine, of 1774*.

" The origin of the Regium Donum was in April, 1723.—Fatal æra! for then proteſtant diſſenting miniſters firſt became ſtate penſioners, and miniſterial tools. At that time the diſſenters expected, what for years before they had juſtly merited of the Brunſwick line,—a complete reſtoration of all their natural rights

* The writer, as I am informed by a reſpectable diſſenting miniſter, John Armſtrong, was the learned Dr. Mayo, an acquaintance of the late Dr. Johnſon, of whom mention is made in Boſwell's Life of that author.

and

and religious privileges. They had often reaſon to complain of biſhops and ſtateſmen, in former reigns; but, under George the wiſe and ſteady, they depended on obtaining the repeal of every ſtatute, which infringed the right of private judgement, violated the liberty of conſcience, and made odious diſtinctions between one good ſubject and another.

" Sir Robert Walpole was then chancellor of the Exchequer, a ſtateſman, who knew too well, for the real intereſts of his country, the paſſions which are moſt apt to be predominant in the heart, and whom no man ever equalled in the application of gold. By this he daily converted his enemies into friends, and ſo charmed even the flaming votaries of liberty, diſſenting miniſters not excepted, as to reconcile them to corruption, and even to court fetters, and rejoice in them. He had obſerved, from year to year, the wonderful effects, which the ſmiles of the treaſury-bench had on all ranks of men; and finding that the proteſtant diſſenters, after being many years trifled with, were moving in earneſt to obtain deliverance from their bondage, he cloſeted a few of their miniſters whom he thought to have the moſt influence among their brethren, and who would beſt anſwer his purpoſes. In their preſence, he wore the maſk of friendſhip and ſanctity—he compli-

complimented them on their great abilities—aſſured them he had the heartieſt zeal for the proteſtant diſſenters, and their intereſts—lamented the poverty and ſmall incomes of many of their miniſters through the kingdom, and that any laws ſhould hang over their heads. The reverend gentlemen (like their ſucceſſors of the preſent day) were ſoon overpowered with his condeſcenſion, eloquence, and goodneſs.—He then declared his readineſs to ſerve them any way, even in parliament, for the repeal of the cruel ſtatutes againſt them: but the preſent year, 1723, was a very improper time—he, the greateſt friend they had, would not adviſe them to apply that ſeſſion; if they did, it would greatly injure, if not ruin the cauſe; but the poſtponing it would greatly promote its ſucceſs in a future period. A reſpectful poſtponing of it was very likely to obtain its ſucceſs; whereas, to bring it on, without any regard to circumſtances, or contrary to the advice of the beſt judges, and their moſt able advocates, might be called raſhneſs, and would do diſhonour to the cauſe. The language of courtiers and their tools is the ſame from one generation to another.

" To enforce this reaſoning, he drew 500l. out of the treaſury, by a warrant payable to a ſurgeon, and which was paid by another agent into

into the hands of nine miniſters. The bait was, " Pray receive this for the uſe and comfort of the widows of diſſenting miniſters, till adminiſtration can more effectually ſerve your cauſe." But a ſtrict charge was given with the money, that the matter ſhould be kept very ſecret. Grateful Sir Robert! to conceal the virtues of his royal maſter, and not ſuffer his favourites ſo much as to ſpeak of this conſiderable taſte of royal bounty, which was alſo promiſed to be annual.

" Some few years after, for their good ſervices to adminiſtration, and to enable them to do more, the ſum was encreaſed and advanced to 850l. half yearly. This is the preſent value of the treaſury warrant; but there are large fees and deductions."

What effect this Regium Donum has had in preventing unanimity in petitions for the repeal of the corporation and teſt acts, and in procuring mean and ſycophantic addreſſes, the diſſenters are not now to be informed.—This account ſhall be cloſed with another extract from the preceding letter.

" Notwithſtanding the baneful tendency and effects of the *Regium Donum*, many diſſenters have contended, that ſtill it is of great benefit

to

to the intereſt, as relieving many poor miniſters, with their widows and children, repairing their places of worſhip, and upholding many antipædobaptiſt congregations in the country, which, without this *royal bounty*, could not exiſt. But theſe advocates ſhould conſider, that, as the money is not deſigned by the treaſury, ſo it is not limited by the preſent almoners, to ſuch uſes. But if every farthing were thus applied, what are all its advantages when weighed againſt the *diſgrace* it fixes upon the diſſenters, as *penſioners and tools of every adminiſtration?*

" A few years paſt, a very reſpectable perſon, then in a high office, was much offended with his friend, a late eminent diſſenting miniſter near London, for the complaints he made on behalf of his brethren, of the difficulties they laboured under in point of religious liberty; and retorted, " *it was well known they received* A HANDSOME SUM OF MONEY *from government to* SILENCE *their complaints as well as their applications—therefore, they ſhould either* NOBLY *throw up the grant, or remain in ſilence.*"

" The troubles and evils produced by the Regium Donum among the body of miniſters themſelves, are too well known. It hath been an Achan's *wedge* in their camp. It hath furniſhed ſome with means to encourage ſepara-

tions, and ſupport parties and diviſions in city and country. It hath enabled former almoners to appear at public collections, charity-dinners, &c. &c. as very rich, or exceedingly generous, to the diſparagement of their brethren. The poor country-miniſters have eſteemed them ſuperlatively benevolent and godlike, believing their donations to be their own property; and have been led to lightly eſteem and cenſure other London-miniſters as covetous or hard-hearted, becauſe their benefactions were not equal to thoſe of the *Regium-Donum-men*. But the greateſt evil is, it hath procured the almoners an influence and power both in city and country, that is *dangerous* and may be *fatal to the cauſe at large*.

"The diſſenting miniſters, by their puſillanimous conduct reſpecting the Regium Donum, (which, with equal propriety, hath been otherwiſe ſtiled *huſh-money*) ſeem not to have conſidered the axiom, that a tree which has but juſt taken root may be removed by a ſingle hand; but let it alone, it will ſtrike ſo deep, and grow ſo high, that thouſands cannot root it up from its foundation. The head of a ſpring may be ſtopped with a very ſmall dam, but when ſuffered to take its courſe, encreaſing to a larger river, it fills the country, and an army of elephants cannot paſs it. It is, therefore,

fore, high time for the London-miniſters either to reprobate this connection with adminiſtration, or to prove to the treaſury, that the gentlemen who receive the 1700l. annually without account, however reputable and worthy, as Chriſtians and miniſters, are *not the repreſentatives of the body*, in that or any other point."

The reader, it is hoped, need exerciſe no extravagant degree of candour, to believe, that the preceding detail was entered upon neither to gratify any private malice, nor to oppoſe any public intereſt;—that it was neither excited by the arrogance of perſonal vanity, nor generated by the effervescence of a heated imagination. So far as the Regium Donum influences one body of men, it hath an indirect influence on the community at large: though not the price of blood, it is, like other penſions, the price of liberty, and on that account ſhould receive the moſt unequivocal diſapprobation and the moſt public animadverſion of ſuch as are well-wiſhers to the political improvement of ſociety. As to myſelf, I neither know who the preſent perſons are, that diſtribute, or that receive this royal bounty; and, if I knew them, I might, perhaps, on other accounts, entertain great reſpect for their characters.

The connection of this affair with Robin-

ſon's hiſtory proceeds from his uniform teſtimony, in private circles, againſt this penſion, and his actually partaking of it himſelf, at leaſt, in this particular inſtance. He has repeatedly declared to many friends, that, in receiving ten pounds from Stennett, he conceived himſelf indebted to the generoſity of private friendſhip; that he never thought himſelf more inſulted, than in being enſnared, as it were, to be a witneſs againſt himſelf. For this reaſon it was, as he himſelf has declared, that the ſingle note from Stennett was preſerved: no receipt, however, for the ten pounds was ever ſent; nor was any reply ever made to the letter.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XVII.

Apparent Change in Robinſon's Theological Sentiments;—Robinſon viſited by ſeveral leading Men of America;—Hint to Poets.

AT the period, to which this hiſtory is now arrived, our author's mind was occupied in multifarious purſuits. By Abraham Atkins, late of Clapham, in Surrey, he was appointed, with Thomas Dunſcombe, of Bampton, Oxfordſhire, William Wilkins, of Riſington, Gloceſterſhire, and Meſſrs. Tomkyns, of Abingdon, Berkſhire, a truſtee under a conveyance of a chapel or meeting-houſe, in Clapham, and of ſundry free-hold and leaſe-hold houſes on the common, in the ſaid pariſh. This, and other appointments, brought with them additional engagements*.

In

* In the year 1786, he was alſo appointed, together with Thomas Dunſcombe, William Wilkins, and Daniel Turner, of Abingdon, a truſtee for the charitable donations of the above Abraham Atkins, conferred by him during his life-time, on the congregations of proteſtant diſſenters undermentioned, viz.—

Kingſton Liſle, Berkſhire.

Straffield Say, Hampſhire and Wiltſhire.

 Farringdon,

In the ſame year, he prepared for publiſhing a new edition of Saurin's Sermons, which was printed in 1784. It appears, likewiſe, that a few documents, relative to the hiſtory of the Welch baptiſts, were communicated to the ingenious J. Thomas, of Leominſter, author of the hiſtory of that people. In mercantile and agricultural purſuits he was, as uſual, ſtill occupied. But the undertaking, to which his thoughts were now more particularly directed, was the hiſtory of the baptiſts.

The genius of Robinſon was of a nature, that neceſſarily rendered him the object of ſuſpicion, among ſuch as call themſelves *evangelical* preachers, and among many, of envy. Hitherto, however, he had maintained a very reſpectable character among the diſſenters in general; and, as a preacher, had acquired a degree of reputation

Farringdon, Berkſhire.
Workingham, ditto.
Buckland, Oxfordſhire.
Oxford.
Coate, Oxfordſhire.
Burford, ditto.
Longhill, Surrey.
Colnbrook, Buckinghamſhire.
Fairford, Glocesterſhire.
Cirencester, ditto.
Stratton, St. Margaret's, Wiltſhire.
Cambridge.

beyond

beyond any of his orthodox brethren. But the face of things now began to change. Several of his Calviniſtical friends were alarmed at his liberality of ſentiment, entertained the moſt ſerious apprehenſions about the purity of his faith,—though no one could impeach the rectitude of his morals; thought he relied too much on his own carnal reaſon; and made with him, both in perſon, and by letter, very earneſt expoſtulations. To this they were excited by ſeveral among ſuch as call themſelves the *ſerious clergy*.

It muſt, indeed, be confeſſed, that about this period, he uſed to ſpeak concerning the Trinity, not only with a degree of ſceptical embarraſſment, but with a levity, inconſiſtent with the character of a ſound believer. Towards what he called the ſcripture Trinity, he carried the exterior profeſſions of reſpect, but took unreſerved liberties with the Trinity in unity.

The cloven foot of hereſy then began to make its appearance, and many ſurveyed it with horror.—One old friend, J. Smith, of London, writes to him about this time, as follows:

" I believe practical religion always has, and always will, increaſe or decreaſe, in proportion as the doctrine of what is called the Trinity,

and others neceſſarily connected with it, are embraced, or rejected; and, as I view it in this light, I have thought it right, in ſome few inſtances, to expreſs my concern, that one whom I have ſo ſincerely reſpected, ſhould be inclined to pour contempt on any doctrine, that to me ſeems to enter into the eſſentials of Chriſtianity."

Robinſon, however, long retained the eſteem of orthodox, no leſs than of heterodox believers, though, among ſome, with conſiderable abatement of ardour, in proportion to the indeterminate ſtate of his mind on theological points. Yet this fluctuating ſpirit inclined him not to relinquiſh too haſtily his old friends, though his benevolence always rendered him acceſſible to new. He reſembled a man ſtraitened by a ſuit of clothes, which ſeemed no longer to fit him; but which he is unwilling to lay aſide. —A perſon always appears moſt eaſy and natural in the laſt ſyſtem of tenets, that he adopts, if he adopt them on conviction. So Robinſon always thought in eſtimating the characters of others, but was too indifferent as to what clothes he wore himſelf.

At this period he ſeems to have been on more intimate terms with ſuch Socinians, as call themſelves unitarians; of which number, indeed,

indeed, were ſeveral correſpondents already mentioned. With Thomas Fyſhe Palmer, that honourable exile, now bearing his faithful teſtimony to truth at Botany Bay, he became acquainted during his reſidence in Queen's College, Cambridge; and an affectionate correſpondence was carried on between them after his departure. The following extract from a letter, dated, Montroſe, May 5, 1784, ſhews that a moſt unreſerved intercourſe had paſſed between them on religious topics, and the latter part, to ſome readers, may ſeem to carry an oblique rebuke.

" I uſed to hope that I ſhould learn humility from your lowlineſs, and now I think I ſhall learn it from the diſguſting manners of . . . . . It is inſeparable from them. The religion of Jeſus teaches, one would think, a man to diveſt himſelf of ſelf; but it teaches . . . . . to be full of themſelves. They ſeem to be religious only to ſhew their vanity. I have known . . . . . write in defence of the unity of God, and of worſhip being only due to him;—that idolatry conſiſted in paying religious homage to a wrong object, and that whenever men worſhipped any other being than the Deity, they were guilty of this. Vanity has made them circulate this paper, far and wide; and the ſame vanity has led them every

Sunday

Sunday to join a genteel congregation in being guilty of this very idolatry they abhorred; their vanity (for it cannot be zeal) has made them lay ſuch ſtumbling-blocks in the way of their brethren, that no after repentance will enable them, I fear, to remove."——

It has already been obſerved, that our author's virtues and talents were held in eſtimation beyond the limits of his own country.

He received, in 1784, a viſit, on which he dwelt with peculiar delight. The following extract from a letter, containing an account of his viſiters, and, at the ſame time, of his rural occupations, ſhall be here ſubjoined.

" *Cheſterton, June* 22, 1784.

" What a ſhort-lived thing is reverie! There ſat I, in my own hall, in more than Indian regal rapture—over againſt me, my wife, making tea—on my right-hand, the honourable ſpeaker of the American houſe of congreſs—on my left, the great general Read, ſecond to Waſhington, in the American army—next to him, an envoy from the ſtates; and along with us a circle of friends, liſtening to the honied accents of their tongues, diſtilling with all the richeſt and moſt fragrant ſounds of liberty, property, law, commerce, religion, and a future

ture ſtate of perfect and everlaſting felicity;—when in came a well-known, grave, and lovely figure, and addreſſed me with, "My dear naughty boy!" Full of ideas of dignity, I ſaid with Mungo in the Padlock, "Naughty boy! naughty yourſelf: old maſſa little tink how great I be!" Did I ever forget you? does a day ever paſs without my remembering you? could not I ſit at your feet to receive inſtruction?

"....., Serioufly, my American gueſts came on Saturday evening,—ſpent the Lord's day with us,—departed on Monday afternoon, and left me the choice of the cabin of the Waſhington, and as much land in the ſtates as I would wiſh to accept. Happieſt of countries! Peace and proſperity attend you! I ſhall never ſee you; but if I forget the ability and virtue, that ſtruggled to obtain, and actually did obtain, all that mankind hold dear; let my right hand forget her cunning.——

"....Pardon this. I return to your letter. My literary matters are at preſent in the field. I have twenty acres of graſs to mow,—an hundred acres of corn to get in at harveſt,—fifty acres of fallows ploughing,—ditching,—manuring, and preparing for the next wheat-crop,—beſide cattle fat and lean to inſpect.

ſpect. Gueſs, therefore, whether I can either journey or ſtudy, with any degree of prudence, till the fall of the year."

The preceding letter was written to his aged and much reſpected friend, Daniel Turner, whom he generally addreſſed in his letters, "honoured father."

In the year 1784, he was engaged in company with Dan Taylor, a reſpectable miniſter, among the general baptiſts*, at the ordination of his friend George Birley, of St. Ives, Huntingdonſhire, and of James Dore, at Maze-Pond, Southwark. His talents for preaching ordination-ſermons had been much admired, and his eloquent, benevolent diſcourſes were received as auſpicious circumſtances at the ſettlement of miniſters. In Cambridgeſhire, and ſome neighbouring counties, ſcarcely a ſingle miniſter was ſettled, or a place of worſhip opened for ſeveral years, at which Robinſon's preſence was not ſolicited, either to preſide, to preach, or, at leaſt, to aſſiſt in the religious ſolemnities. But of the ceremony of ordination he now entertained no high opinion, and engaged in the ſervice, merely to gratify his friends, not from any conviction of its importance.

* The general baptiſts embrace the doctrines of Arminius,—the particular, thoſe of Calvin.

By

By a letter which our author received, at this period, from his eſteemed friend, Dr. Rippon, editor of the Baptiſt Regiſter, and of a hymn-book, it appears, that one or two hymns in that collection were compoſed by Robinſon. Theſe had appeared before in Dr. Evans's and George Whitfield's hymn-books, and were written by him, when among the methodiſts; one is well known, and much admired by the methodiſts, and ſuch as, in contradiſtinction to the *rational* diſſenters, call themſelves *evangelical*:—it begins thus,—

Come, thou fount of every bleſſing,
Tune my heart to ſing thy praiſe.
Streams of mercy never ceaſing,
Call for ſongs of loudeſt praiſe.

There is alſo a Chriſtmas-hymn in the ſame ſtrain, which was ſet to muſic by his reſpected friend, Dr. Randall, profeſſor of muſic in the univerſity of Cambridge.

Of poetry Robinſon affected to think meanly, though he read, and even admired Shakeſpeare, Milton, and Young; and two or three ſtanzas of the preceding hymns diſcover ſomething of the *vivida vis animi*, a lively energy of mind, that characteriſes poetic genius. Indeed, all his proſe-writings poſſeſs the σφοδρον και ενθουσιαστικον παθος—that vehement and enthuſiaſtic glow of paſſion, ſo eſſential to poetry, and which,

which, by proper cultivation, might probably have conducted him to ſome eminence in that ſublime art.

When philoſophers affect to treat poetry with contempt, they are no leſs ridiculous, than Grey, when he inſulted mathematics, a ſcience, that he had not induſtry to ſtudy, or no deſire to comprehend. If, indeed, every rhymeſter is a poet, poetry is unqueſtionably a moſt trifling art; but, if poetry is but philoſophy in its moſt agreeable and elegant attire, then muſt this incomparable art be approached with a greater portion of reſpect. The five ſources of ſublime, marked out in ſuch energetic and glowing language by Longinus*, cannot be better illuſtrated than by the following paſſage from a writer, who was no leſs an orthodox divine, than an ingenious and profound critic. "Since, then, poetry is ſo venerable both from its antiquity, and its religion, they are no leſs worthy of rebuke, who treat it as a ridiculous art, and permit none but boys and young perſons to purſue it. How unjuſt this calumny is, may be perceived from the following conſideration, that whoever acquires a happy ſkill in this ſpecies of writing, ought not only to excell in the greateſt acuteneſs of genius, in elegance, and ſplendour

* Longinus, Περὶ Ὕψους, ſect. viii.

of

of diction; but to be matured by a moſt exact judgement, and to be ſtocked with all the furniture of literature. Indeed, he muſt turn over the annals of former times, and the monuments of ancient tranſactions: he muſt underſtand the various cuſtoms of nations—he muſt acquire a knowledge of the actions and paſſions of mankind—he muſt explore the inward receſſes and avenues of the mind—he muſt ſurvey the frame and ſtructure of the univerſe—he muſt, in a word, exhauſt all nature. The erudition of Homer, and of Horace, there is no one, who does not perceive and commend. Who does not admire in Virgil, more particularly, every kind of literature; both parts of philoſophy, hiſtory, geography, and the chief of all the ſciences, mathematics? From Lucretius we are ſufficiently taught, that natural philoſophy and poetry are in perfect harmony; and it is but right, that the ſame ſchool ſhould be devoted to both *; nor have philoſophers, however ſerious, reaſon to complain, that one is diſgraced by its fellowſhip with the other †."

Robinſon's correſpondents in 1783, 1784, and 1785, beſides others already mentioned, were as

* The School of Natural Philoſophy, at Oxford.

† Prælectiones Poeticæ, in Schola Naturalis Philoſophiæ, Oxon. habitæ, Auctore Joſepho Trapp, A. M. Coll. Wadh. Socio, &c. p. 8.

follows:

follows:—Thomas Mullet, merchant, of Broad-ſtreet;—R. Hudſon, of Wick-houſe;—J. Thomas, author of the Hiſtory of the Welch Baptiſts;—Matthew Randall, a ſon of Dr. Randall, of Cambridge;—James Dore, paſtor of a baptiſt congregation at Maze-Pond, Southwark;—J. Smith, of London;—Job David, a ſenſible Socinian baptiſt-preacher of Frome;—Thomas Fythe Palmer, B. D. at that time a Socinian preacher, at Montroſe, in Scotland*;—W. Lewes, Stanford;—W. Evans Biſhop, a diſſenting miniſter, at Epping;—John Rippon, (now Dr.) editor of the Baptiſt Regiſter, and of a collection of hymns.

* To whoſe merit I would bear teſtimony with Gilbert Wakefield, and ſpeak of him, as "vir doctus, ingenioſus, et omni laude cumulandus, ... idcoque barbari homines ac nefarii . . . . . ad ſolitudines Novæ Hollandiæ relegârunt:

——Sed ſidera teſtes
Intendunt oculos." SILVA CRITICA, vol. v. p. 45.

A learned, ingenious man, worthy of receiving every praiſe. Barbarous and nefarious men have, therefore, baniſhed him to the deſerts of New Holland.

But e'en the ſtars are witneſs to his wrongs.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XVIII.

Account of ſome ſmaller Publications of Robinſon's, and of his Sixteen Diſcourſes publiſhed in 1786.

AT the cloſe of the year 1784, and in 1785, little occurs, that requires a diſtinct ſurvey. This chapter, therefore, ſhall take a view of ſuch of our author's ſmaller works, as have not yet been noticed, and of his ſixteen ſermons, which, from having been preached in barns and villages near Cambridge, have been called Barn, or Village-Sermons.—Theſe works are:

1. Chriſtianity, a Syſtem of Humanity, &c. a Sermon in behalf of the Charity School at Horſlydown, Southwark, for the Education and Cloathing of 50 Boys; preached at Salters'-Hall, London, Wedneſday, March 3, 1779; publiſhed at the requeſt of the Managers. London, Buckland.

2. Chriſtian Submiſſion to Civil Government; a Diſcourſe preached at Cambridge, January 30, 1780. Cambridge, Hodſon.

3. The Chriſtian Doctrine of Ceremonies;

a Sermon preached at Dr. Fordyce's Meeting, in Monkwell-ſtreet, London, December 25, 1780, to the Society that ſupport the Evening-Lecture there. London, Etherington, 1781. To which is added an Appendix, containing a Criticiſm on 2 Cor. iv. 3.

4. The General Doctrine of Toleration, applied to the Particular Caſe of Free Communion, 8vo. Cambridge, Hodſon, 1781.

5. The Kingdom of Chriſt not of this World; a Sermon preached at Broadmead, Briſtol, Auguſt 28, 1781; being the Day of the Annual Meeting of the Education Society: publiſhed at the Requeſt of the Society. Briſtol, Pine, 1781.

6. The Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures; a Sermon preached at Salters'-Hall, London, on Wedneſday, September 11, 1782, in behalf of the Bible Society. London, Lepard, 1782.

7. Sixteen Diſcourſes on ſeveral Texts of Scripture; addreſſed to Chriſtian Aſſemblies in Villages near Cambridge: to which are added ſix Morning-Exerciſes, 8vo. pp. 436. London, Dilly.

8. A Diſcourſe preached at the Ordination of

of the Reverend James Dore, at Maze-Pond, Southwark.

9. A Diſcourſe delivered at the Ordination of the Reverend George Birley, St. Ives, Hunts.

10. An Eſſay on Liberality of Sentiment, publiſhed, with ſome alterations by the editor, Charles De Coetlogon, in the firſt number of the Theological Magazine.

11. Slavery inconſiſtent with the Spirit of Chriſtianity; a Sermon preached at Cambridge, February 10, 1788. Bowtell, Cambridge; and Dilly, London.

12. A Sermon on Sacramental Teſts, preach-at Cambridge, November 5, 1789. To which is ſubjoined an Eſſay on the Slave Trade. Cambridge.

13. A Plan of a Charity School, for the Education of the Boys and Girls of Proteſtant Diſſenters, at Cambridge.

Theſe ſmaller works are, in general, written with elegance of ſtyle, and with ſtrength of ſentiment; they are methodical in their arrangement, though method frequently is interrupted by the ſallies of a lively imagination,

and ſprightly addreſſes to the hearers. But they all keep one leading object principally in view, and preſerve an unity of deſign. In a few inſtances, ſimplicity of expreſſion is broken in upon by a coarſeneſs, which is ſaid not properly to belong to the pulpit: and the arguments are often weakened by a too frequent application to the hearers: the poetical parts of the ſcriptures are with great dexterity ſo interwoven into the author's remarks, as to ſpread over them a peculiar brightneſs; but this uſe of the eaſtern metaphors is, ſometimes, too general and extemporaneous; and the author does not always ſucceed when he attempts criticiſm.

The leading excellencies of theſe ſermons are, love of liberty—zeal for the diſſenters—a deſire to promote the intellectual improvement of his hearers, and to guard them againſt ſuch extravagancies as they obſerved in other communities. Two extracts we ſubjoin: the firſt ſhall be from a ſermon entitled "Chriſtianity, a Syſtem of Humanity," a ſermon preached in behalf of the proteſtant-diſſenters' charity-ſchool, at Horſlydown, Southwark.

"Your anceſtors, gentlemen, the old puritans, whoſe ſucceſſors ſince have been called nonconformiſts, and, of late days, proteſtant-diſſenters, were a noble race of men. I am ſorry to ſay, few of our hiſtorians have done them juſtice:

juſtice: the moſt have written partially. Theſe venal ſcribblers may be put into two claſſes: the firſt wilfully drop, or careleſsly loſe them; the laſt miſrepreſent and reproach them. We aſk, "What evil have they done? Were they ignorant and illiterate?" Neither. Read their voluminous works, and ſee. He muſt have a bold front, who dares charge them with want of literature. If they were equal to their contemporaries, juſtice is their due; if they excelled them, they have a right to honour; had they fallen ſhort of others, they had been objects of pity; but, Where would have been the crime? Were they enemies to piety? Alas! their zealous attachment to this was their ſin, and procured from their adverſaries the nickname, puritan. Were they prone to ſedition?—Sedition!—why, they of all men had the beſt notions of civil government, and yielded an uniform obedience to it. Whence, then, the partial treatment of which we complain?—My brethren, theſe men were ſtern aſſertors of the civil and religious rights of mankind; they entered into the genius of the preſent Britiſh civil conſtitution (the civil conſtitution, I ſay) before it was brought to its preſent maturity: and along with that their hiſtory is incorporated. When our former princes ſtrove to render themſelves deſpotical, they declared againſt the tyranny, openly avowed that arbitrary government was unconſtitu-

tional, and that, for their parts, they would be free. The will of God revealed in the ſcripture, was their religion,—and the nation's happineſs, their civil law. From this line they never departed, no, not all the time the race of Stuart intrigued, plundered, and ſlew. This ſchool was one of their lateſt efforts, and for this they were ſtruggling, when the laſt ſpark of that direful houſe went out.

" Let it not ſhock you, that they were perſecuted. Men, who diſtinguiſh between a conſtitution, and the guardians and adminiſtrators of it, who adhere to the firſt, which never varies, and are ſubject to the laſt, who often change,—ſuch men, being inconvertible, are ſometimes in faſhion, and at other times antique. When the conſtitution flouriſhes, they are in reputation—when that decays, they ſink along with it into honourable neglect or diſgrace; and this is the caſe of all, even noble families, who are firm to the conſtitution."

The other extract is from a ſermon preached at Broadmead, Briſtol, on the day of the annual meeting of the Education-Society, now under the direction of Dr. Ryland.

" Suffer me, more particularly, young gentlemen, to exhort you to attend to this part of

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our ſubject. Never affect the dignity of prieſthood; ever deſpiſe the miſery of prieſtcraft; never affect ſhow and parade in religion. The little excreſcences of pride, the paltry exhibitions in proteſtant churches, are reflections on the ſenſe of thoſe who import them; for they are imported from Italy. Pardon me a homely compariſon; and, if it be wrong to expoſe ſuperſtition to contempt, forgive me, at leaſt for once, this wrong. Really, when I compare the little cheap decorations of reformed churches, with the maſter-pieces of Italy, our gaudy days, with their grand proceſſions, our beggarly imitations of their pontifical magnificence; I call theirs pomp, ours poverty—they are nature in the theatre of the metropolis—we are ſtrollers, uttering bombaſt in caſt-off finery, in a booth at a fair. Prayer, baptiſm, the Lord's ſupper, explaining a truth, enforcing a duty,—do theſe ſimple exerciſes, divine in their origin, manly in their performance, and effectual in producing all the ends, for which they were inſtituted; do they require the deſpicable ſhreds of papal trumpery to engage mankind to practiſe them? "My kingdom is not of this world."

"Our Lord ſaid truly to Pilate; "if my kingdom were of this world, then would my ſervants fight." Yes! moſt adorable Redeemer! if thy kingdom required ſplendour, thy ſer-

vants have ſuch an high veneration for thee, they would expend all, they would ſpend and be ſpent in thy ſervice. Nature and art in rich profuſion, the architecture of Greece, and the muſic of Italy, ſtatues, vaſes, pictures, habits, the treaſures of the Eaſt, and the refinements of the Weſt, the ſpices of Arabia, the cabinets of antiquaries, the jewels of princes, the luxurious pomp of the moſt magnificent monarchs, ſhould adorn thy palace, and enrich thy throne—but—thy kingdom is not this world."

Of the object of the Village or Barn-Sermons, the reader may form ſome opinion from the following extract from the preface.

" The proteſtant-diſſenting congregations at Cambridge, from the firſt forming of them, have always conſiſted, beſides inhabitants of the town, of a great number of families, reſident in the adjacent villages. In theſe laſt families, there have always been children and ſervants, aged and infirm perſons, who could attend the public worſhip in town only occaſionally, ſome once a month, on the lord's-ſupper-day, others once a quarter, and the very aged only once or twice in the ſummer. It hath, therefore, been the conſtant practice of their teachers, in compliance with their own deſire, to inſtruct them at their own towns

about

about once a month. In ſome there are houſes fitted up on purpoſe; and in others, barns, in ſummer, when they are empty, and, in winter, dwelling-houſes anſwer the ſame end: when either have been too ſmall to accommodate the auditors, as they often have been on fine evenings, the preachers have ſtood abroad in an orchard or a paddock, or any convenient place. The following diſcourſes are a few of many which have been delivered in ſuch places. They are printed, as nearly as can be recollected, as they were ſpoken.

" In ſome places, and in ſome ſeaſons, the teacher hath tarried all night, and half an hour early in the morning hath been employed in devotion, and giving inſtruction. The ſhort diſcourſes, called for diſtinction ſake, Exerciſes, were delivered at ſuch times. It was uſual, too, before ſermon in the evening, to catechiſe the children, by hearing them read a ſhort ſcripture-hiſtory, and queſtioning them about the ſenſe of it."—The ſermons are on the following ſubjects.

Diſcourſe I. The Chriſtian religion eaſy to be underſtood: delivered at Dry-Drayton.—Diſcourſe II. Almighty God is the lovely Father of all Mankind: at Granchester.—Diſcourſe III. We ought to be content with Providence: at Hauxton.—Diſcourſe IV. The ſcripture is a good

good Book written by Divine inſpiration: at Sawſton.—Diſcourſe V. Jeſus Chriſt is the principal perſon mentioned in Scripture: at Fulbourne.—Diſcourſe VI. The merit of Jeſus Chriſt diſtinguiſhes him from all other Perſons: at Ickleton.—Diſcourſe VII. Jeſus Chriſt is the moſt excellent of all teachers: at Stapleford.—Diſcourſe VIII. The death of Jeſus Chriſt obtained the remiſſion of ſins: Harſton.—Diſcourſe IX. Jeſus Chriſt is the Governor of his diſciples: at Whittlesford, before a Public Baptiſm.—Diſcourſe X. The Chriſtian religion ſhould not be confounded with Heatheniſm: at Little Shelford.—Diſcourſe XI. The Chriſtian religion ſhould not be mixed with that of the Jews: at Fen-ſtanton.—Diſcourſe XII. Chriſtians ſhould behave properly to ſuch as give confuſed accounts about Religion: at Fulbourne.—Diſcourſe XIII. The ſpirit of God guides all good men: at Fulbourne.—Diſcourſe XIV. Faith and holineſs are inſeparable: at Cheſterford.—Diſcourſe XV. Incorrigible ſinners will be without excuſe at the laſt day: at Foxon.—Diſcourſe XVI. Any perſon, who underſtands Chriſtianity, may teach it: at Wickham.

The morning exerciſes are on the following topics. I. Induſtry: delivered at St. Ives. II. Caution: at Great Everſham. III. Frugality: at Hauxton.—IV. Covetouſneſs: at Hauxton.—V. Self-

—V. Self-preſervation: at Fulbourne.—VI. The Jews: at Wickham Brook.

Theſe Sermons and Exerciſes are by no means of the common caſt: whether they poſſeſs more merit, or leſs, than the generality of ſuch compoſitions, will be determined differently by different perſons. They certainly all diſcover a ſtrain peculiar to the preacher, little of that ſyſtematic ſtrictneſs, adopted by the orthodox diſſenters, or of that formal air of moraliſing, characteriſtic of the epiſcopal clergy. Yet the ſpirit of the diſſenter, and a dignity of principle pervade the whole, and you every where meet with fervid zeal in the cauſe of liberty, determined hoſtility to religious eſtabliſhments, an attachment to the intereſts of non-conformiſts, and a deſire to diſſolve by warm and tender affections, the angry and diſcordant believer. The ſtyle is ſimple, and the more animated paſſages flow with that unſtudied, yet powerful eloquence, peculiar to a man of fancy, when borne along the ſtream of popular admiration, and ſupported by energetic affections. Such diſcourſes, however, after all, derive much of their value from the manner of delivering them, and our author's was univerſally allowed to be original: that every deſcription of readers will be gratified by their peruſal, is by no means aſſerted; by ſome they may

may, perhaps, be reckoned too political, by others not ſufficiently experimental; and by others not decided as to doctrines, or explicit as to ſentiments: but whoever can admire the brilliant ſallies of fancy, or be gratified by the diſplay of amiable and benevolent manners, by the ſtudious condeſcenſion of a great man labouring to populariſe his ideas, cannot fail to receive great entertainment, whatever concluſions he may draw concerning the character of the preacher, or the temper of his doctrine. "Cedet uti conviva ſatur," he will go away ſatisfied and repleniſhed with his feaſt," and, whether orthodox or heterodox, may apply to theſe diſcourſes what Plutarch ſays of certain poets, "their contradictory aſſertions, by deſtroying their credibility, do not throw ſufficient weight into either ſcale to do injury *."

One circumſtance will not fail to ſtrike an attentive reader of the Sermons, and Morning-Exerciſes: they had been delivered ſeveral years back, during the author's more immediate connection with the Calviniſtical party: he muſt, conſequently, have preſerved notes: a kind of awkward and ſpurious orthodoxy diſtinguiſhes them—ſuch ſentiments and language

* Αι δε των ποιητων υπεναντιωσεις προς αυτους αιταναφερουσαι την πιστιν, ουκ εασιν ισχυραν ῥοπην γενεσθαι προς το ελαττον. Plutarch. de audiendis Poetis.

as

as even Calviniſts might think ſavoury meat, and ſuch as heretics could ſit down to with pleaſure: ſometimes the preacher talks like a child of grace; at others ſo much like the pupil of nature, that ſome have ſcarely conſidered him a believer*: in ſhort, theſe ſermons exhibit what many of our author's works exhibit, a man attempting to reconcile incongruities, and to perform impoſſibilities: ſetting off, at one time, like an orthodox man, and ending like an heretic, or ſetting off like an heretic, and ending like an orthodox man: a Calviniſt and Socinian might unite in ſaying of them what the ingenious author of the Indian Cottage ſays of Error: "I cannot better compare it, than to the glare of a fire which deſtroys the dwellings, that it enlightens†."—But though the preacher, often trifles; the philanthropiſt more frequently charms: though you may not always underſtand his creed, you cannot fail to be caught by his benevolence; and in the man you loſe ſight of the divine.

* See particularly the Sermon, entitled the "Chriſtian Religion eaſy to be underſtood," and compare it with the Confeſſion of the Savoyard curate in Rouſſeau's Emilius.

† L'erreur au contraire eſt l'ouvrage de l'homme: elle eſt toujours un mal: c'eſt une fauſſe lumière qui luit pour nous égarer; je ne puis mieux la comparer qu'à la lueur d'une incendie qui devore les habitations qu' elle éclaire. La Chaumière Indienne par Jaques-Bernardin-Henri de St. Pierre.

The

The following letter, written by Robinſon, to an eſteemed friend, ſhall cloſe this chapter: it will explain the particular courſe, and the ſeverity, of his ſtudies, in 1786: and will be connected with the ſubſequent account of his elaborate reſearches into eccleſiaſtical hiſtory.

" *Cheſterton, September* 28, 1786.

" Honoured Sir,

"For once I ſhall have the pleaſure of anſwering your favour directly. We deliver in all our books at every quarter-day*. I don't chooſe to ſend my large lot in the crowd, ſo mine went yeſterday, and your letter came back. To morrow my dockets are to be returned, and on Saturday I ſet off again with new ones. Meantime I ſtrike out my next draft, which is Italy, and prepare for my winter campaign. I find, there are ample materials in the two ſets of Muratori: the firſt is his Rerum Italicaſum Scriptores varii in unum collecti corpus, contained in 28 volumes folio. The ſecond is his Antiquitates Italicæ Medii Ævi, 6 volumes folio. I have made great uſe of theſe in my preliminary eſſays, and I ſaw then what they would do in my hiſtory. His Theſaurus Inſcriptionum, 4 vols. folio, is uſeful, and ſo is his Anecdota Eccleſiaſtica, and his Anecdota Græca. He is an invaluable collector of authentick monuments. I have two ordinations

* Viz. to the Public Library, Cambridge.

to

to attend in October, one of a general baptiſt in St. Ives, Huntingdon; the other of a particular baptiſt at Biggleſwade, Bedford. Then I go to ſupply one lord's day a deſtitute neighbouring church, and I fear I muſt run up to town for a day or two with my youngeſt ſon, who is going in a trading veſſel to Smyrna, juſt to ſee him aboard. I foreſee no more winter interruptions.

"The Ruſſian church comes up three times in my plan. Once in the preliminaries, to authenticate the *fact* of their dipping, for trine immerſion is, and ever was their practice. This is eſtabliſhed from the old Greek menologies collected by Izanphurnaris, Goar, Habert, and others: as alſo from their councils, comments, &c. Modern travellers aſcertain the fact now, as Gordon, Dr. King, and many more. The preſent empreſs is an anabaptiſt, or, to ſpeak more properly, ſhe was ſprinkled in her infancy, when ſhe was princeſs of Anhalt Zerbſt, and dipt when ſhe married the Czar Peter, and took the name of Catharine Alexiefna.

"Ruſſia comes up a ſecond time in the hiſtory of Greece. I have divided this into three periods. The firſt is from the beginning to the removal of the ſeat of empire to Byzantium, during which, the church was not eſtabliſhed,

and

and the earlier Greek fathers flouriſhed. Here is no ſhadow of infant-baptiſm. The ſecond reaches from the erection of the eaſtern empire to its deſtruction by the Turks. This is properly the Byzantine hiſtory. The Byzantine hiſtory conſiſts of 36 folios of the princeſs Anna Comnena, Zonaras, Glycas, Ducas, Acropolita, Cantacuzen, Procopius, Bryennius Cæſar, and others. There is in this library a magnificent ſet of theſe writers, and I have taken the hiſtory from them. Here the hiſtory of baptiſm divides itſelf. In the eſtabliſhment there is dipping and infants: among the diſſenters ſingle and trine immerſion, but no infants. I think I have proved, contrary to the opinion of Dr. Prieſtley, that the Eunomians dipped, and dipped only adults. I think an anecdote in the Ανεκδοτα of Procopius puts it out of doubt. It is the hiſtory of a young officer, the ſon of an Eunomian, who conformed to the Greek church, in the reign of Juſtinian. The laſt period reaches from the conqueſt of Conſtantinople to the preſent time. Here, under the patriarchates, comes up Ruſſia. Here is dipping (trine immerſion) and infants.

" Ruſſia appears a third time in the hiſtory of Lithuania in Poland. This was a ſpecies of Greeks called Rutheni, who coaleſced with the catholicks. Prince Oſtrog, palatine of

Kiow, who was of this kind of Greeks, patroniſed the unitarian baptiſts on his eſtates at Lubaſtow, Oſtropolis, and other places, and actually built them a place of worſhip at Conſtantow; and in all theſe parts, and through Red Ruſſia they flouriſhed; and governor Gabriel Hoyſki, lord Lieniuta, the ſons of judge Czapliſki, and many others, were of their churches, both patrons and members. Jerom of Prague, the Taborites and Calixtines of Bohemia, the diſciples of Huſs, from whom came the Moravian baptiſts, and the Tranſylvanian churches, who were the offspring of the Poles, had all ſome connections near or remote with the Greek church. Dipping was common to both parties, though the Bohemian baptiſts poured. My account of Poland, Tranſylvania, and Bohemia are all written. They muſt be reviſed, and they fall into the ſecond volume. My ſketch of Greece conſiſts of about eighty pages of ſuch paper as this letter. Perhaps I may throw in a few more; and perhaps I may ſcratch out, when I ſit down ſeriouſly to reviſe for the preſs.

" In regard to Signor Valdeſſo, I have ſeen his conſiderations in Engliſh. I do not think them of any great conſequence, and I hope you will not give yourſelf much trouble about the original. Hitherto I have made it a law to

truſt nothing but original authentic monuments, for I have obſerved ſome foul play in tranſlations and quotations. I have Bayle. I have tucked Valdeſſo into Navarre, and if I find any thing in Italian monuments, as probably I may, (and indeed I think I have met with him either in Muratori or Montfaucon) I ſhall put him in his proper place, Naples.

" On overlooking the above, I fear I wrote it before I was well awake. The clock ſtruck three, when I dipped the firſt pen. While my kettle boiled I wrote. Now that I have breakfaſted, and have taſted " the nutritive aid of the beloved pipe," my brains are brightened, and I return to the charge, perceiving I had forgotten two things. Firſt Regenvolſcius,—I thank you for the information. He was of the Unitas Fratrum. His book is a ſmall quarto, full of authentic information. I have made great uſe of him in Poland, to which, and to the Greek-catholics of Lublin, his accounts chiefly belong. He was alſo of great uſe to me in Bohemia. He gives authentic liſts of Taborite and Calixtine miniſters, and throws great light on the diſputes between archbiſhop Rokyzan, and Nicholas Peldrimouſki. Thence came the Moravian baptiſts. Poplinerius, Stranſki, Dubrauſki, Æneas Sylvius, Toppeltinus, the acts of prince Racokſki, Eſterhazi, Iſthuanſi, and many

many more fall in well with Regenvolſcius; but he contains more original information of that ſpot, in Lithuania, than they all. A more valuable book, and a far more ſcarce, is a ſmall piece written by Lubieniéſki. I had deſpaired of finding him, when, lo, a gentleman of Trinity-college found him in a blind corner of that library. I fear I ſhortened my lecture the night I got hold of him, through impatience to read him. Dubrouſki I procured from Queen's-college library.

"My next omiſſion regards Italy. I ſpoke of Muratori. I ought to have ſaid, that I had finiſhed the firſt period, and that, inſtead of authentic hiſtory, I had been forced to prove that the Latin church had no authentic hiſtorians of their firſt period; but had filled up the chaſm with legends of the ninth and tenth centuries. What parcels of martyrologies, menologies, metaphraſtai or life writers, have I been forced to turn over! It pleaſes me to find, that even this generation of liars had not the courage to put infant-baptiſm into their hiſtories of Saint Agathas, Saint Felicitates, and other ſuch traſh. On the contrary, baptiſteries, adults, confeſſions of faith, and ſo on, appear every where. Nine volumes of Ughelli's Italia Sacra, three of Rocchi Pirri's Sicilia Sacra, four of Ripamonti's Milan, one of Bernard de Rubei's de Eccleſia Aquileienſi, and

others of this ſort, have been of great uſe to me. Adults and baptiſteries without end. My beſt book here has been a modern work of Paciaudi, and his deſcription of the cabinet of the late pope Benedict (XIV. I think) who was a mild, learned, curious antiquary. They laugh at ſuch as pretend that baptiſm was adminiſtered by ſprinkling for the firſt eight or ten centuries. Paul Maria Paciaudi publiſhed his Chriſtian Antiquities at Rome under the auſpices of Benedict XIV. in 1759. The pope aſſiſted and inſpected the work. He was a great lover of antiquities, and Paciaudi had acceſs to ſeals, rings, coins, cups, vaſes, habits, monumental inſcriptions, manuſcripts, &c. all of the pope's private cabinet. Speaking of an antique moſaic work in the baptiſtery of Ravenna, in which the artiſt hath repreſented John pouring water on Jeſus, he exclaims thus—" Præcurſor vaſculo aquam in caput Chriſti effundit. At quæ *monſtra* nuntiant ejuſmodi emblemata! Numquid Chriſtus Dominus *adſperſione* baptizatus? Tantum abeſt a vero, ut nihil magis *vero* poſſit eſſe contrarium: ſed errori et inſcientiæ pictorum tribuendum, qui quum hiſtoriarum ſæpe ſint ignari, vel quia quidlibet audendi poteſtatem ſibi factam credunt, res, quas effingunt, mirifice aliquando depravant." By a variety of ancient Etruſcan monuments, taken from the Muſeum Florentinum, and other ſuch works of Gorius, Kircher, Bonanni, Salvinii,

and others, I think, I have demonſtrated that infant-ſprinkling is not Chriſtian baptiſm but pagan luſtration, and was in uſe long before either Jeſus or Moſes, ſo that if they aſpire at antiquity, here they have it,—an antiquity which we dippers do not boaſt of, or envy. I trouble you with all this for the ſake of your advice on the propriety of my plan, the worth of my materials, and the names of authors, which may have eſcaped my notice, and fallen under yours. I ſit before you as before my father, and I have not opened my matters to any but yourſelf in this ample manner. You may gueſs my reaſon. . . . . .

" Muratori, then, belongs to the middle ages, during the kingdom of Italy, firſt under the Lombards, then under Charlemagne and his ſucceſſors: including alſo the Exarchate of Ravenna. I know already that there was no ſprinkling in Italy during this period. Baptiſteries there were, and ſome yet remain. This is the inſcription on one:

DOMINA NOSTRA FLAVIA THEVDOLINDA
AEDIFICARE FECIT HOC BAPTISTERIVM
VIVENTE DOMINO NOSTRO AGILVPHO.

" Moreover, the Lombard laws prove that *Infans* ſtood for a minor, an infant in *law*, not a

natural infant, and ſo it did among all, Greeks, Romans, Goths, Franks, &c. The cauſe of infant-baptiſm diminiſhes in proof every day in my eyes, and I am ever finding ſomething, which ſeems as if it were written on purpoſe to produce this effect. I pitch foot with father Mabillon, and affirm it did not appear in the Weſt till the fifth century: and that impudent debauchee, Saint Auguſtine, who was baptiſed along with his baſtard Alypius, by Ambroſe at Milan, himſelf a middle-aged man, and the boy about ſixteen,—that Auſtin, who kept a miſtreſs while he was preparing for baptiſm, and writing books to defend Chriſtianity,—that was the man, who invented original ſin, and baptiſm to waſh it away, and told a lie to ſupport it by calling it an apoſtolical tradition, when he, who was the ſon of a Chriſtian woman, had not been baptiſed in infancy himſelf. I look upon him to have been a true Carthaginian, and one of the beſt examples of Punic faith that ever lived."

This letter was written to Daniel Turner; and though ſome of our readers, probably, may exclaim, "How great the labour, yet how trifling the purſuit!" others may receive from it much uſeful inſtruction.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XIX.

Robinſon's Diſagreements with the Orthodox.

THERE exiſts, according to an ingenious writer, a reſpectable, as well as a ſpurious orthodoxy. The latter he thus defines: "It is the overflowing of zeal without knowledge; which is not contented with men's profeſſing the ſame faith, but would force them to defend it by all and ſingular the arguments, whether weak or ſtrong, and all the texts, whether ſpurious or genuine, that have ever been employed in its defence: which, whenever a rotten and ruinous outwork of religion is demoliſhed, utters as hideous a ſhriek, as if the very foundations of the building were ſhaken, and the church of Chriſt nodded to her fall*,"

In aſſerting, in the preceding chapter, that a ſpurious orthodoxy pervades Robinſon's Barn-Sermons, all intended was this, that amidſt much ſimplicity of ſentiment, ingenuity of explication, and ardour of expreſſion, obſervations occaſionally occur, ſcarcely recon-

* "Letters to Mr. Archdeacon Travis, in anſwer to his Defence of the Three Heavenly Witneſſes, 1 John v. 7." by R. Porſon, Preface p. 26. 27.

cilable with very ſavoury tenets, ſuch, at leaſt, as are agreeable to the taſte of the generality of churches, ſuch, for which Robinſon himſelf retained a conſiderable reliſh, while ſeeking after different food.

In another point of view, theſe diſcourſes are moſt reſpectably orthodox: and, probably, ſome of Robinſon's friends may conſider the following obſervations on them more accurate, than ſuch as have already been given. They are extracted from a letter to our author from W. C. Unwin*, a ſenſible orthodox clergyman, of the eſtabliſhed church, who, while at college, was an intimate acquaintance of Robinſon's.

"There are," ſays he, "ſome few things in the ſermons, *that I cannot underſtand*, and *believe them to be printed wrong*. I had marked them, but loſt the paper, or *would freely have communicated my remarks*. I found very many more, that I hope never to forget! You ſeem to me to have fulfilled the prophecy, that, "to the poor the goſpel ſhall be preached," before

* W. C. Unwin was a ſtudent, and, if I miſtake not, afterwards, a fellow of Chriſt-College, Cambridge. He became tutor to the children of Cowper, the ingenious author of the Taſk. One of Cowper's poems is addreſſed to Unwin.

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any man now living, for you lay it bare in its naked ſimplicity, which I have long thought the "one thing needful" in the preaching of ſome good people."

But Robinſon's orthodoxy was certainly not very high ſeaſoned, and many perſons of true orthodox *gout* fell out with the cook.

Reſpecting his diſagreements with ſome of his Calviniſtical friends, a few hints have already been dropped. The proceſs of his mind, however, in its ſucceſſive changes of religious ſentiments, it is unneceſſary to trace; and, as it would perhaps be impoſſible to diſcover, it would be ridiculous to purſue: we ſhould have not only to mark out the boundaries between faith and reaſon; and to diſtinguiſh the vagaries of enthuſiaſm, from the deliberations of judgement; but to marſhal, as it were, and to put in order the ſallies of an imagination, not a little extravagant; to draw fixed concluſions from conceſſions by no means permanent, and to keep to a determined point a mind, inconſtant from principle, and wavering from choice; which, if not influenced by the prejudices of opinion, was exceedingly biaſſed by the ſoftneſs of friendſhip, and the weakneſs of affection: we ſhould, in a word, bring ourſelves into a ſtate of ridiculous reſponſibility, and expoſe ourſelves

ſelves to the hazard of a fortuitous contradiction.—Superior genius, and extreme preciſion are frequently like two parallel lines, that move in oppoſite directions, and never meet.

That a conſiderable change actually took place in Robinſon's mind, on theological tenets, long before he publiſhed his hiſtory, there can be no doubt: though the feelings of his heart, on this occaſion, may be more eaſily traced, than the order of his reflections: quotations from letters to confidential friends will explain theſe: and a few candid obſervations ſhall follow, in order to do juſtice to all the circumſtances of the caſe, and, as much as may be, to qualify mutual aſperities: for though, like uncle Toby, a man may be willing to travel many a mile in queſt of truth, like the ſame honeſt man, he may be willing to trudge as many more to avoid a quarrel.

Ye ſons of candour and of moderation, whether, like Pythagoras, ye diſcard the pride of the ſophiſt, and aſſume the more modeſt appellation of philoſopher: whether, like Socrates, ye eſtimate ſpeculative wiſdom only in proportion to its utility, profeſſing "to know but this, that ye know nothing†;" or, like Plato, ſoaring beyond ſenſible objects, ye are engag-

* Xenophon. Memorab. l. iv.

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ed in the contemplation of ideas, and of infinite mind* ; or whether ye embrace the religion of Jeſus, profeſſing to " love one another as brethren ;" or, like the poor Indian outcaſt, are content to follow ſimple nature, and, comparing truth to the dew of heaven, wiſh to preſerve it pure, by collecting it in the pure veſſel of an honeſt heart†,—to whatever ſchool ye belong, and whatever tenets ye profeſs, bear teſtimony againſt the man who breathes the language of bigotry: diſtinguiſh the domineering inſolence of pedantry, from the modeſt tone of an inquirer, and the cordiality of a believer from the manœuvrings of politicians, and hypocrites.

The memoirs of a ſpeculative man are the hiſtory of intellect ; and in ſuch a narrative, the ſhifting views of inquiry, the motley ſcenes of religious party, neceſſarily fall under ſurvey. Were theſe ſubjects entirely omitted, the hiſtory might proceed more agreeably ; but, would there not ſtill remain a wide gap ? Would not the reflections that ariſe, be leſs uſeful and pertinent? Ye admirers of John Calvin, take theſe remarks with you : ye ſhall be left in the undiſturbed poſſeſſion of your creed : not a ſin-

* Platon. Parmenides.

† A paria : ſee la Chaumière Indienne.

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gle article of your faith ſhall be impugned: but while I follow the line of my duty, charge me not with malevolence.

The letters, and extracts from letters, that ſhall be laid before the reader, were written at different periods; but all between the years 1786, and 1790; and all are connected with the ſame ſubject.

The following paſſage is copied from a letter to a diſſenting miniſter of great benevolence, and moderately orthodox.

" I have been ſeven weeks in London: my own party treated me with neglect, and even preached againſt me in my preſence, about mental error, which, " ita Dii me ament," not a ſoul of them underſtands. I preached, however, for the general baptiſts, and for Drs. Rees, Kippis, Price, Worthington, &c*. So

* Theſe reſpectable perſons, together with Thomas Morgan another ſenſible diſſenting miniſter, and, I think, Polhill, late member for the borough, went to hear Robinſon give a lecture ſome time prior to this period, when he preached among the Calviniſts: they all agreed to borrow Price's expreſſion, " that he was the fineſt colloquial preacher they ever heard."—It will afford our readers pleaſure to be informed, that the Life of Dr. Price will be ſhortly laid before the public, written by his nephew, George Charles Morgan, an ingenious and well-informed man, author of Lectures on Electricity.

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that now the ſlandering orthodox name me an Arian and Socinian, with apparent grace. They are a bitter, miſchievous generation, and many of the moſt zealous are immoral and diſhoneſt: ſtuffed ready to burſt with faith, they have no room for virtue."—This letter was evidently written under great irritation of mind.

In the following letter, more patience is exerciſed towards perſons, but great ſeverity is directed againſt their ſyſtems.

" *Cheſterton, January* 10, 1788.

" Dear Sir,

" For once you ſhall not have cauſe to complain of my delaying to write. If . . . . . wrote that letter which I received from Abingdon, I would adviſe him never to defend Calviniſm again, for he himſelf is one of the beſt and ſtrongeſt arguments againſt it that ever I met with. Our chief objection againſt Calviniſm, is the fourneſs of it. Even poor ſmall beer is preſerved till it acquires acidity, and then all reaſon for the preſervation of it ceaſes. I conſider . . . . . as one of the beſt-natured men in London; but if Calviniſm can ſpoil ſuch a temper as his, it is a violent preſumption againſt it. See now; his natural temper is good, but his ſyſtem teaches him, " No, your nature is wicked,

ed, altogether wicked." . . . . . His manners are mild, gentle, benevolent; but his ſyſtem teaches him it is a ſin to treat erroneous people with benevolence, for there is a damning guilt in error, and he who doth not reſiſt it, is not found in the faith; and if he is unſound, down he goes, chuck into the devil's jaws, who champs him as crows do a freſh bone.— . . . . . If ſuch a temper as . . . . .'s can be ſo metamorphoſed, as to throw about firebrands, arrows, and death, for the comfort of idiots, the torment of infidels, and the glory of God, what have we to expect from the tempers of men who are naturally ſavage?"

The perſon alluded to in the following letter, has diſtinguiſhed himſelf in America and England, by preaching and writing on the doctrine of future puniſhment. His opinion is that, which was maintained by the late David Hartley *, and has ſince found an advocate in Dr. Prieſtley. He maintains, that future puniſhment is not endleſs, and that the torture of the damned will finally work their converſion. He viſited Robinſon at Cheſterton, and his viſit revived our author's diſguſt againſt the orthodox, which he thus expreſſes in a letter to a friend †.

" Mr.

* See Hartley's Obſervations on Man.

† I cannot paſs by a joke of Robinſon's, when Wincheſter

" Mr. Wincheſter has been here and preached. I did not hear him. The . . . . . preach and print againſt him. They pretend that God is of their temper, and will not bate a day of eternity. They never knew what criticiſm was, and they do nothing but chaunt *for ever, and for ever*. Poor honies! ſervants who know not what their lord doth! Tell one of them, " There are twenty-five millions in France, and there is not one among them like you. Are all theſe doomed by their own father to endleſs and unavoidable woe?" They anſwer gravely, " Yes." Aſk, what ſort of a father this is? They are never ſhocked; they never bluſh; but affirm, " this is wife, and juſt, and kind; and it will be more glorious to God, to ſave me, and damn them, than it would be to ſhare eternal life amongſt us: and we few, though we hate one another here, ſhall be the happier for the damnation of the reſt." Barbarians! What arrogant madneſs inſpires you? Are you the excellent of the earth? " O! my ſoul, come not thou into their aſſembly; to ſuch, mine honour, be not thou united. Curſed be their anger, for it is cruel!"

cheſter was firſt introduced to him. " What!" ſaid he, " are you the man, who think that God Almighty will burn the old tobacco pipes, till they become white again?" —He gave him the right hand of fellowſhip.

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The following letter is added, not as applicable to the preſent caſe, for it was written on another occaſion, but as explanatory of circumſtances incident to Robinſon's ſituation; and as containing conſiderable humour: it was written to Thomas Dunſcombe, a worthy diſſenting miniſter, before mentioned.

" It is really deplorable to ſee the condition of ſome of theſe churches; ſome ſapling of a miniſter collects and embodies weaklings, like himſelf; a ſort of inſipid chit-chat is made the teſt of a Chriſtian; and as men of ſenſe will not diſgrace their underſtandings by chaunting ſuch ſtuff, they are left. Not one of theſe church-babies foreſees that in human ſocieties, human frailties muſt produce diſagreeables; not one, therefore, is prepared to meet ſuch things, but in the moment of a difference, void of all prudence, moderation, or decency, out they ſet a crying, ſcaring themſelves, and bellowing up the multitude, as if the world were at an end: when nothing is the matter, only Billy the baby has broken Billy the baby's doll. It is impoſſible in the nature of things, that in our churches any thing can happen of conſequence enough to juſtify ſuch violent dealings as are often ſeen. Nobody's life is endangered here; nobody's property is diſpoſed of without his conſent; nobody is compelled

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to attend. In ſhort they are our unruly paſſions, that give church diſputes all their conſequence; and if they were bridled, no harm could happen. If a diſpute is too much for contending parties, Why do they not ſubmit it to the arbitration of men cooler than themſelves? I think nothing can excuſe ſuch monſtrous conduct as poſting up papers about church diſputes, upon market croſſes. Zeal, frantic zeal, what infinite miſchief it does!

"I have diſpoſed of this ſummer, in repairing and painting my houſe, in receiving company, and in a month's retirement; and I have made one obſervation: I never had ſo much company ſucceſſively, in ſo ſhort a time, in my life—and I have remarked only a few of the many miniſters, who are ſincerely ſtudying the New Teſtament, the four goſpels, I mean. I want a man who vindicates the book, and aſcertains the fact, that the hiſtory of the incarnation is not an addition, and this by ſober, juſt criticiſm. I do not want authorities of great names. I want reaſons to convince my underſtanding. I want one who gives me the genuine doctrine of the four goſpels, before the epiſtles were written, a man as familiar with Paleſtine, as his own country; with Herod, John, and others of that day, as with George III. and Pitt, and Fox. I do not want a quoter of texts, and a packer of

eccleſiaſtical news. I want a good ſound logician, who knows how to reaſon, and who is no novice, ... a cool, deliberate, honeſt diſciple of Jeſus, who pauſes, and weighs, and admits the refining fire of inquiry to burn freely. Ah! my friend! what a falling off is here! Inſtead of poſſeſſing treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge, alas! we are aſked one queſtion, and we gape like dying rooks: and yet we are ſet for the defence of the goſpel, and the Lord, even Jehovah himſelf, is wonderfully with us. As for mere ſquirrels, that jump, and friſk, and crack nuts, they divert me, for in my eye their idiotiſm is the ſeal of their ſalvation. But I hate your Cat-o'-mountains that hiſs and ſcratch out harmleſs people's eyes. Brother, let us not be miſchievous by our tempers; let us not be Jack-nobodies by our idleneſs, and inactivity. Let us begin to ſtudy at the feet of the quiet and mild maſter, and in patience let us, as he hath taught us, poſſeſs our ſouls. Peace be with you. Love to all, except Miſs Dunſcombe: here is not room enough to hold my expreſſions of eſteem for her.

" Yours ever,

" R. Robinson."

From the preceding letters, it appears, that, at the preſent period, Robinſon's ſentiments concerning

concerning the ſyſtem of Calvin were materially changed; it appears, likewiſe, that his opinion of the men who profeſſed it, had undergone alterations. Thus he ſpeaks of the Calviniſt-preachers among the diſſenters, in the year 1779—Could he mean to exclude his own party?

" Among theſe, the Engliſh proteſtant-diſſenters ſtand firſt in merit; and as their congregations are conſtitutionally in poſſeſſion of Chriſtian liberty, they have produced ſome of the greateſt preachers in the world. It would be eaſy to give a long liſt of names from the dawn of the reformation to this day; but I ſacrifice the pleaſure of doing ſo to the modeſty of my friends. This, however, I will venture to ſay, and no man ſhall ſtop me of this boaſting, we have now in our churches exact copies of our ancient models. The prophets, do they live for ever? Yes, they do! The ſpirit of Elijah reſts upon Eliſha! The grave ſolidity of Cartwright, and Jacob, ſeemed to reſide in Owen, and Goodwin, and Gill.—The vivacity of Watts, and Bradbury, and Earle, lives in others, whom I dare not name. The patient laborious Fox,—the ſilver Bates,—the melting Baxter,—the piercing Mead,—the generous Williams,—the inſtructive Henry,—the ſoft and candid Doddridge,—Ridgley,—

and Gale,—and Bunyan,—and Burgeſs, in all their variegated beauties, yet flouriſh in our pulpits, exerciſing their different talents for mutual edification. We have Barnabas, the ſon of conſolation, and Boanerges the thunderer, ſtill. Ye ſervants of the moſt high God, who ſhew unto us the way of ſalvation; peace be within the walls of your churches, and proſperity within your dwelling-houſes!—You have no *palaces*, you need none, palaces can add nothing to you *."

The ſyſtem of Calvin ſhall ſhift for itſelf: on the parties referred to by Robinſon, in his ſevere animadverſions, a remark or two ſhall follow.

All religious ſocieties, doubtleſs, have among them immoral characters and ſolemn dunces. Thoſe, at the head of which, Robinſon for ſome time flouriſhed, will, among others, come in for their portion. Who will ſay, that all, who teach others, poſſeſs knowledge, and, that all who profeſs godlineſs, are ſaints?

Beſides, from people deriving no advantage from our public inſtitutions, and whoſe miniſters frequently receive not the benefit even of their own, our expectations muſt not be too ſan-

* Claude's Eſſay, vol. ii. Brief Diſſertation on preaching the Word, p. 64. 65.

guine.

guine. Great liberality of mind muſt not be generally looked for, where a man's future hopes are all made to cling about five points of doctrine: among men, trembling frequently between the points of extreme depravity, and of extraordinary ſanctity, will frequently be diſcovered characters bigoted, unnatural, artificial, hypocritical. Jonathan Edwards, a writer much admired by the Calviniſts, has well obſerved, "It is with profeſſors of religion, eſpecially ſuch as become ſo in time of the out-pouring of the ſpirit of God, as it is with the bloſſoms in the ſpring; there are vaſt numbers of them upon the trees, which all look fair and promiſing; but yet very many of them never come to any thing; and many of thoſe, that, in a little time, wither up, and drop off, and rot under the trees, yet, for a while, look as beautiful and gay as others; and not only ſo, but ſmell ſweet, and ſend forth a pleaſant odour, ſo that we cannot, by any of our ſenſes, certainly diſtinguiſh thoſe bloſſoms, which have in them that ſecret virtue which will afterwards appear in the fruit, and that inward ſolidity and ſtrength, which ſhall enable them to bear, and cauſe them to be perfected by the hot ſummer-ſun, that will dry up the others. It is the mature fruit which comes afterwards, and not the beautiful colours and ſmell of the bloſſom, that we muſt judge by. So new con-

verts (profeſſedly ſo), in their talk about things of religion, may appear fair, and be very ſavoury, and the ſaints may think they talk feelingly; they may reliſh their talk, and imagine they perceive a divine favour in it; and yet all may come to nothing*."

At the ſame time, among the Calviniſts many are found, who deſerve commendation for their ſincerity: and their zeal ſhould be eſtimated, not by its fervour, which is frequently intemperate, but by the doctrines which they believe ſo important. Whether the ſyſtem of St. Auſtin and of Calvin be true or falſe, whether or no thoſe who embrace it quit the path of experience for the regions of fancy; whether they faſhion their tenets in conformity to the mechaniſm of the human mind, or compel the operations of the mind to obey the capriciouſneſs of feeling, and the extravagance of paſſion: however this be, ſuch as repoſe on this ſyſtem with expectations of eternal happineſs, and reckon it almoſt the only foundation of their virtue, muſt not be prejudged without examination, nor too haſtily condemned. Men deſerve no cenſure for believing a ſyſtem to be true, but for not giving it an impartial inveſtigation; not always for being miſ-informed or miſtaken, but for being proud of their folly,

* Edwards on Religious Affections, part ii. p. 88.

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and arrogant in their ignorance; for trifling with moral obligations, while pretending to divine influences, and the powerful ties of religion; for bearing about the tale of ſcandal againſt an heretical brother, while offering hypocritical prayers for his recovery. Several, whoſe names might be here introduced, were a contemptible, becauſe a mean, indolent, malignant race; petty theologues, who thought that to reaſon was a mark of unregeneracy, and to enforce virtue ſavoured of carnality: others, who preached againſt Robinſon from their pulpits, and who were in return lampooned and be-ſermoniſed by him, were not, indeed, without failings; but, notwithſtanding, were men of ſincere intentions, of ſtrong convictions, and of virtuous conduct*; though even by them Robinſon was too illiberally handled. Did he indulge againſt them the Vanitas Ingenii†? He received in return a plentiful portion

* Of the perſons more particularly here alluded to, one was Dr. Samuel Stennett, of whom it is but juſtice to ſay, in addition to what has been already ſaid, that, in private and domeſtic life, he was amiable and affectionate, and that his ſermons on Perſonal Religion diſcover conſiderable talents; the other was Abraham Boothe, who in his Pædobaptiſm examined on the Principles, Conceſſions, and Concluſions of the moſt learned Pædobaptiſts, diſcovers extenſive reading; and in his Apology for the Baptiſts ſhews, that he poſſeſſes the powers of cloſe reaſoning from his own principles.

† The vanity of genius.

of the Theologicum Odium *. Robinſon, as well as the oppoſite party, laboured under miſtakes, and ſome it would be no difficult taſk to point out; both exhibited inſtances of human frailty, though to dwell on them is not the province of biography.

That different ſects, and that zealous rivals in the ſame ſect, are ever forward in bringing againſt each other mutual charges of error and of contradiction, both in doctrine and in diſcipline, is an obſervation ſo obvious, that it may almoſt be received as an eſtabliſhed proverb. The admirers of "The Hiſtory of the Corruptions of Chriſtianity †" are forward to maintain, that the ſyſtem of Calvin is leſs favourable to morals, than that received by themſelves; and another publication ‡ labours to prove, that Socinianiſm is more unfavourable to a religious and virtuous courſe, than Calviniſm. But though the duty of the biographer is rather to aſcertain and to illuſtrate characters, than to defend, or to controvert tenets, it is certainly not intended to ſacrifice Robinſon at the ſhrine of orthodoxy, nor to concede, that Calvin's ſyſtem can attain thoſe ſublime heights,

* Theological hatred.

† By Dr. Prieſtley.

‡ "The Calviniſtic and Socinian Syſtems compared as to their Moral Tendency." By Andrew Fuller.

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to which Robinſon's generous ſoul carried the love of liberty and of benevolence. Theological morals are not always the pureſt, nor theological language the moſt liberal. Juſtice, that weighs all circumſtances, guides to truth*.

Robinſon ever uſed to maintain, that the unpardonable ſin which he committed, was his conduct towards the Calviniſt preachers: and it is certain, that the clerical attire, the official ſolemnity, the ſevere and moroſe orthodoxy, the ſuper-celeſtial raptures (in ſome ſuch manner he uſed to talk) of many of his Calviniſtical friends, he frequently ſatiriſed as well in private circles, as in the pulpit, with all the point of ingenious raillery. This he called "pricking the bladder."—"Preachers (ſaid he) are too full of wind, and it is mercy to let it out."—He did not even ſpare himſelf.—"My people (ſaid he) can preach themſelves, if they think proper; but they are determined to keep a parſon; that is their only reaſon for ſupporting me."

Another circumſtance muſt not be paſt unnoticed. The baptiſts have a fund in London to aſſiſt their poor miniſters of the Calviniſtic perſuaſion. Of thoſe who ſolicit aſſiſtance, a

* ——Δικη δ' ὑπερ ὑβριος ισχει
Ες τελος εξελθουσα. Heſiod. Εργ. v. 215.

teſtimonial,

teſtimonial, declaratory of a ſound faith, is expected. The Calviniſt-baptiſts conceived, that none but orthodox preachers were entitled, according to the original condition of the inſtitution, to receive aſſiſtance. Robinſon thought, as the fund continued to be ſupported by voluntary ſubſcriptions, that the ſphere of its liberality ſhould be enlarged. "Why (ſaid he) ſhould benevolence be confined to a party? Why the Chriſtian be overlooked, and the Calviniſt only regarded?"

This invariable friend to religious liberty, therefore, laboured to break down thoſe barriers of theological points; he urged, that to be in want, and to be a Chriſtian, were ſufficient qualifications "to receive charity."—The baptiſt-board in London thought otherwiſe: they inſiſted, that Robinſon, under a pretence of introducing liberality into the churches, ſtudied to ſpread the contagion of hereſy; to weaken the frame, and to deſtroy the bloom of Calviniſm; that out of the milk of his philanthropy he wiſhed, as it were, to compoſe a draught, which, after inſenſibly infecting the paſtors, would operate as a ſlow poiſon on their flocks. Many miniſters, therefore, who began to reliſh his doctrine, were obliged to forego their accuſtomed claims.

In

In a letter to his ſenſible friend, Mary Hays*, he writes as follows:

" *March* 4, 1789.

" There is in our congregation (for we receive all) a very worthy, but very poor old miniſter, who choſe his laſt days ſhould be ſpent with a people he eſteems. The old man was adviſed to petition the baptiſt-board for a ſhare of that charity, which they annually aſſign to ſuper-annuated miniſters. Inſtead of ſending him charity, they ſent him faith†, and informed him,

* This female writer is well known in a reſpectable literary circle: but the only publication that has yet appeared with her name, is entitled, " Eſſays and Letters, Moral and Miſcellaneous;" it is an early production of herſelf and ſiſter, but diſcovers marks of ingenuity and reflection.

† Robinſon means articles of faith to ſubſcribe. This fund has been already mentioned, p. 178 of theſe Memoirs; and with reſpect to the gratuity beſtowed on me ſeveral years ago by the fundees, I think it but juſtice to myſelf to obſerve here, that no articles of faith were ever propoſed to me. Indeed I had ſacrificed ſo many private comforts, and had turned my back on ſuch flattering proſpects, in purſuit of religious opinion, and liberty of conſcience, preferring to go deſtitute among the diſſenters, to ſubſcribing the 39 articles, and to indulging any expectation, either from college, or from the church, that, in my greateſt neceſſities, I experienced ſomething of Robinſon's pride: had the baptiſt-fundees offered me articles of faith to ſubſcribe, I ſhould certainly have reckoned it the

him, they had made a law not to relieve any, except they ſubſcribed a creed, a *human* creed, which they ſent him; and the firſt article of which

the greateſt inſult they could have offered me: and they were too prudent to propoſe them. But I rather ſuſpect that Robinſon uſed, if not a *pious*, at leaſt a *benevolent* fraud on this occaſion. To ſpeak the truth, I never knew the actual relation, in which I ſtood to this generous man, till a few days from writing this paragraph. All I knew was, (for I was extremely inattentive to many things that occurred at the period now alluded to,) that Robinſon diſcovered for me the greateſt friendſhip; that I was much indebted to himſelf and many of his friends; that I reſided with him a twelvemonth; that I uſed to preach for him occaſionally, and that, during my continuance at his houſe, he requeſted of me, *as a particular favour*, to draw up a Latin treatiſe on the Scripture-Doctrine of Juſtification, with an Engliſh tranſlation, which he wiſhed to ſhew ſome of my London friends; this was accordingly performed; and, perhaps, the baptiſt-board, through reſpect for Robinſon, for he was at that time in great eſtimation with them, and through tenderneſs for me, might receive this treatiſe as a ſubſtitute for a ſubſcription to their creed. The civility received from the baptiſt-fund defrayed the expenſes of my board, &c. while I was at Robinſon's houſe, and was, I ſuppoſe, paid into his hands for that purpoſe. But though the aſſiſtance was received under the above circumſtances, the ſervices rendered to the recipient were not, on the one hand, leſs eſſential: but, on the other, neither muſt the London baptiſts, nor any other friends, who, amidſt the excurſions of my roving life, have rendered me ſervices, expect that I ſhould bow at the ſhrine of a ſpurious gratitude. True morality conſiſts in the ſpeaking of truth, and in the practice of juſtice; and the

great

which is "There are three divine perſons in the unity of the Godhead! Abſolute nonſenſe! ſupported by tyranny over men's conſciences. The old man believes as they do, and he ſent up a faith, as ſound as old Calvin's itſelf; but he could not help boggling at the idea of a London lord over a country brother's conſcience. In this church* we all hold inviolably the perfection of ſcripture without human additions; and, for the reſt, the old man believes what he approves, though nobody hardly believes with him, for we are only brethren, and nobody plays Jupiter here."

The baptiſt-board, however, ſtill inſiſted, that they did but act in conformity with the rules of the fund, while Robinſon, who ſcarcely ſaw any orthodoxy ſo important, as thoſe

great ſolace of human life is the enjoyment of liberty. Whatever oppoſes theſe, ſhould be reſiſted with compoſed yet dignified firmneſs; nor ſhould the moraliſt, through the weakneſs of a groveling affection, or the irritations of a falſe gratitude, ſhorten his periods, or yield to unreaſonable reſtraints. Gratitude, as commonly underſtood, is the nurſe of undefinable weakneſſes, and of innumerable indiſcretions, the ſource of dangerous and gigantic crimes; but whoever underſtands the nature and practice of juſtice, though he may think it his duty to deceive thoſe expectations, which the ſyſtem of morals taught in the church, as well as in the world, countenances, will never, in the fair ſenſe of the word, be ungrateful.

* Robinſon meant his church at Cambridge.

ſimple principles, which lead to a virtuous courſe of life, pronounce the ſtrict baptiſts in an error. Theſe matters continuing to widen the breach between him and his former brethren, each thought the other very wide of the truth.

Oh! Robinſon, thou man of playful wit, of luxuriant imagination, of elaborate inveſtigation, of eloquence that led captive admiring congregations, but of a benevolence that ſighed for a wide-extended ſphere, of ſympathies, and of ſuſceptibilities, that made thee feel the diſtreſſes of others, the wrongs and inſults, ſometimes ſuch as were imaginary, that oppreſſed thyſelf, thine was but the common lot of humanity!

Extraordinary talents, generoſity impatient of bounds, and a mind unſubmiſſive to reſtraints, accompanied, as they uſually are, with exquiſite ſenſibilities, and frequently with ſtriking infirmities, are doomed to experience all the viciſſitudes of forward hopes, and of glowing delights, of haſty anticipations that produce confidence, and of galling diſappointments that terminate in miſanthropy.

However ſeverely ſome of Robinſon's Calviniſtic friends concluded concerning his conduct

duct in this affair, many, even of them, believed him to be influenced by the pureſt benevolence; and the churches and poor miniſters that declined a little from orthodoxy, thought him entitled to their warmeſt gratitude.

This was particularly the caſe with the Welch baptiſts. The baptiſts in general, both in England, in Wales, and in America, entertain the moſt liberal ſentiments on civil government, and, to their praiſe be it ſpoken, have been before-hand with the governments of the world, in aſſerting the liberties of mankind; but the Welch baptiſts have been particularly zealous, and many of them, ſtill retaining the ancient Britiſh ſpirit, are as much devoted to religious as civil liberty. In Wales there exiſts a curious phænomenon—a few churches that unite the belief of predeſtination with the doctrines of Arius or Sabellius: yet very reſpectable authority, Job David, a name well known among the Welch baptiſts, aſſerts, that this is actually the caſe with ſeveral churches. The pride of the Welch ſpirit was, therefore, wounded, and, through the medium of a very ſenſible and amiable man, the Welch miniſters returned their thanks to Robinſon for the part ſuſtained by him in this buſineſs.

The following extract of a letter reflects honour

nour on the perſon who wrote it, and on the perſon by whom it was received :—

" Sir,

" Allow me to apologiſe for the length of time I have taken to acknowledge the receipt of your friendly letter from London, and to expreſs, on the part of the Welch miniſters, the obligations they are under for the ſpirited part you have taken, in voluntarily becoming their advocate, regarding the requirement made by the fundees. This buſineſs originated with one of our miniſters, more as the effect of chagrin, than any malign ſpirit: a ſeparation having taken place in his church, he haſtily concluded the cauſe to be Arianiſm or Sabellianiſm. My opinion is, that but few if any will comply; and ſhould a few be diſpoſed, they will make uſe of their provincial language, which will afford the fundees ſome difficulty to underſtand. 'Tis to me rather a painful employ to perſuade many of them to ſpurn at the demand, knowing how acceptable a few guineas are to them, without being able to point out any reſources to fly to, as a ſupply for the loſs. I have written to the ſecretary on the ſubject: and if what I have propoſed will not ſatisfy, the majority will prove that they are not degenerated from their anceſtors, in an ardent love for liberty."

The

The writer of the preceding letter was W. Williams, of Cardigan, in South Wales—a man of independent fortune, of very liberal ſentiments, and exceedingly well informed; he is in the commiſſion of the peace, and diſcharges the duties of a reſpectable magiſtrate, and of a diſſenting miniſter to a numerous congregation.

It muſt be, further, added on this ſubject, that the Welch baptiſt-miniſters had never been called upon to ſign a confeſſion of faith, till a report of Arianiſm, Socinianiſm, Sabellianiſm, or of ſomething of that kind, was ſpread, which cauſed a motion to be made at the meeting of the fundees, that was carried, viz. "that the miniſters and churches, who receive out of this fund, on their next application, give a particular and explicit account of their faith, eſpecially relating to the Divinity of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt."

All which remains to be added on this ſubject, is,—that the moſt diſtant reflection on the characters of individuals is not intended by the preceding account: that men may be angels of liberality in their private capacity; but that the influence of theological opinions on ſocieties is inconceivably great; that the man in the world, and the man in the church, are ſometimes as dif-

ferent perſons, as men born on oppoſite ſides of the globe;—that many of the Welch baptiſt-miniſters and churches never ſigned the creed, and of courſe received not the bounty of the fund;—that others reckoned it but juſt in the baptiſt-board to demand a teſt of orthodoxy, and but reaſonable that a Calviniſt-miniſter, before he received the alms of this fund, ſhould ſubſcribe a Calviniſt confeſſion.

As to Robinſon, he thought the whole a ſyſtem of oppreſſion, and uſed to lament to his univerſity-friends as follows: "Many of our diſſenters admire your clerical petitioners, who oppoſed ſubſcription in the church, as well as Tyrwhitt, Jebb, Edwards, and Frend, who oppoſed it in the univerſity, and yet impoſe it on their own ſtudents and their own miniſters."

—— Quid rides? Mutato nomine, de te
Fabula narratur. HOR. SAT. I. V. 69.

Why do you laugh, my Non-con? Change the name;
High church, or low, enſlaved is much the ſame.
D.

In the cloſe of the year 1787, our author met with a ſevere domeſtic affliction, which is very pathetically deſcribed in letters to his friends, Daniel Turner, Henry Keene, Mary

Mary Hays, and Dr. Toulmin. The letter addreſſed to Dr. Toulmin ſhall be tranſcribed.

" The laſt queſtion in your favour of July 18th, "How your family is?" requires an anſwer which you will accept as an apology for my ſilence. Alas! my heart is too full. I can only tell you we are now recovered, and returned to our uſual labours. Three years, the loveliеſt of all girls, the pride and the beauty of my family, was declining. In October ſhe fell aſleep, ſaying, as ſhe reclined her head, Lord, into thy hands I commend my ſpirit. Seventeen years of age—five feet ten inches high—ſtraight as a palm-tree, a fund of wit, an innocence of manners, and a piety and virtue regulated by the wiſe and juſt ſentiments of the great Supreme, all, all are fled, and here am I,—here,

As on a lonely building's top,
The ſparrow tells her moan,
Far from the tents of joy and hope,
I ſit and grieve alone.

" My dear ſir, ſay nothing to me; I try to acquieſce. I comfort my wife, and the reſt of my family, and in collecting for them, ſoothe myſelf; but this hath been a great wound; for all were moſt affectionately attached to the

lovely Julia.—I have done.—I am a parent.—Forgive me."

This young woman was all that is deſcribed by Robinſon. The "Elegy on the Death of a young Lady," inſerted in my poems, was occaſioned by the death of Julia Robinſon. It ſhall be inſerted here.

I.

If ever poet breathes a generous ſtrain—
If ever pity heaves the tendereſt ſighs—
It is when virtuous youth is doom'd to pain;
It is when blooming beauty droops and dies.

II.

But if with youth, with beauty, were combin'd
The ſweeteſt flower of genius opening fair,
The ſofteſt manners, and the pureſt mind,
Heroes might weep, and ſaints let fall a tear.

III.

Take then, oh! earth, take to thy clay-cold bed,
Beauty and youth, as rich as earth can ſend;
And take the tear, tear ſofter ne'er was ſhed,
Of father, mother, brother, ſiſter, friend.

IV.

But long thou muſt not hold that beauteous clay,
That virtuous maid more lovely ſtill ſhall riſe;
What's born of heaven ſhall ſpring to endleſs day;
Beauty may fade, but virtue never dies.

A Proſpectus of one of Robinſon's hiſtories was this year tranſmitted by him to ſeveral of the

the churches: and after all the religious bickerings ſtirred up amongſt them, it is agreeable to read the expreſſions of unbounded reſpect, which they returned: though, indeed, many of theſe expreſſions were mere words. For though they could not help eſteeming the man, they certainly were not bound to countenance what they ſuppoſed his errors. How could it be expected that the orthodox ſhould become hearty patrons to an author, who, though with one hand he ſupported the cauſe of baptiſm, intended to ſinite, as they ſuppoſed, with the other, the fabric of Calviniſm? Some, indeed, even of the orthodox baptiſts continued his faithful and invariable friends to the laſt; but with reſpect to many, ſuch too, who were among the firſt to encourage his undertaking, he had reaſon, both in behalf of himſelf and his hiſtory, to exclaim, "my mother's children were angry with me*."

The names of his correſpondents this year have appeared before: there will, therefore, be leſs occaſion to introduce them again. One, however, ſhould be mentioned, not only as not

* So at leaſt it is aſſerted by Benjamin Staley, a ſenſible and highly eſteemed friend of Robinſon's. Staley was one of the original committee, that met for the purpoſe of ſoliciting our author to undertake the writing of a Hiſtory of the Baptiſts. He is now a deſerter from the ſtandard of orthodoxy.

having been introduced before, but as one of the oldeſt, and one of not the leaſt ſincere of Robert Robinſon's friends. This was S. W. Wilkins of Norwich, a man to whom, I embrace the opportunity, in paſſing, of acknowledging very eſſential ſervices rendered to myſelf in paſt times.

From the various letters written to our author this year, relative to his hiſtory, one ſhall be laid before our readers, written by a perſon who is known to be exceedingly well acquainted with many curious matters in eccleſiaſtical hiſtory. This is Joſhua Thomſon, a man of an independent fortune, and for many years an occaſional preacher among the general baptiſts*.

"Reverend Sir,

"From the ſpecimen of your hiſtory of the baptiſts, or rather of baptiſm, which you have honoured me with, I really think, if my opinion were of any worth, that the work, when finiſhed, will be an important acquiſition to the Republic of Letters,—caſt ſome rays of light upon the dark regions of antiquity,—

* This perſon's name has been ſeveral times introduced before, and by miſtake, he was called John Thomſon: his letters are ſigned only with the initial J. and this cauſed the miſtake.

and

and by ſtating indiſputable facts, no matter whether through the hands of Arians, Socinians, or Athanaſians, friends, or enemies, help an honeſt enquirer in his ſearch after truth; and, at the ſame time, (if I may be allowed to ſpeak my free ſentiments, without the imputation of flattery, which I am very far from being inclined to), be a laſting monument of the learned author's extenſive reading, indefatigable induſtry, and ſingular ſagacity, in ſelecting proper materials for his ſubject. Under this conviction, I heartily wiſh it may be laid before the public; though my ſtate of health for ſome time paſt hath been ſuch, as to render it very uncertain, whether I may live to ſee the plan completed. Of its general ſpread there ſeems to be little doubt, conſidered only as a book of literature, to adorn the libraries of the learned and curious.

" I am, Sir,

" Your Obedient Humble Servant,

" J. THOMSON."

" *Clapham, June* 14, 1787."

CHAPTER XX.

Short Account of the Proceedings in the Univerſity of Cambridge, in the years 1787, *and* 1788.

IN the years 1787 and 1788, ſome tranſactions occurred in the univerſity of Cambridge, which could not but intereſt Robinſon, no leſs from the direct courſe of his ſtudies, and the powerful energy of his convictions, than from the conſequences that enſued, and from our author's connections with ſome of the parties concerned.—Here the buſineſs of ſubſcription to the thirty-nine articles will be again brought before the reader.

On the eleventh of December 1787, a Grace was introduced into the ſenate-houſe, by a learned and liberal-minded man, Dr. Edwards*; the object of which was, to remove ſubſcription to the uſual form, at the time of taking the degree of bachelor of arts.

This Grace was rejected, and no reaſon aſſigned for its rejection; nor was any reaſon

* Editor of Plutarch de Educatione Liberorum, and author of Remarks on Dr. Kipling's Preface to Beza.

urged,

urged, even for the exercise of such discretional power. To the praise of the university, however, and to the honour of literature, be it spoken, that the only person, who attempted a public vindication of that act of mental degradation,—subscription, was Dr. Kipling, deputy-professor of divinity, a man, who, in every literary department, in which he has made his appearance, either before the university, or the public *, has only appeared, to expose his insufficiency, and to render himself ridiculous: another person who made himself conspicuous on this occasion, was the present Dr. Coulthurst, a disciple of St. Austin's, and Calvin's, then a fellow of Sidney-college.

The person, who more particularly interested himself in this business, and who afterwards took a more active part in the town and university, so, as at length to undergo a public trial in the senate-house, to be deprived of his

* Witness, the fac-simile of Beza's MS. and the vile Prolegomena. The publication of the above celebrated MS. should, for the honour of literature, have been assigned to more able hands. When the deputy-professor undertook this task, it is to be lamented, that some intelligent friend had not saved his credit, by giving him seasonable advice,

Εστιν το τολμαν, ω φιλ', ανδρος ου σοφε.
Rashness is not the wise man's character.

tutorship,

tutorſhip, and to be expelled from college, was William Frend, a learned and worthy man, then a fellow and tutor of Jeſus-college, who, from between the years 1780, and 1787, had officiated as a miniſter of the church of England. Through diſapprobation of the doctrine of the Trinity, he reſigned the living of Long-Stanton, near Cambridge; he, afterwards, took a vigorous part in oppoſing ſubſcription to religious teſts, and in ſpreading his favourite theological tenets, in contradiction to the Trinitarian, called Unitarian, through the town and univerſity*. In 1788, he was deprived of the reſpectable employment of tutor of Jeſus-college, and the attendant profits, amounting to above an hundred and fifty pounds a year. In this buſineſs Dr. Beadon, an old acquaintance of Robinſon's, then maſter of Jeſus-college, now biſhop of Gloceſter, acted as accuſer and judge: and "ſentence was pronounced without the formal requiſition of a defence." The biſhop of Ely, viſiter of Jeſus-college, ratified this ſentence by his decree†.

For

* See Frend's Thoughts on Religious Teſts, &c. Appendix, p. 34.

† Frend publiſhed a pamphlet entitled, "Thoughts on Subſcription to Religious Teſts, addreſſed to Dr. Coulthurſt," and an "Addreſs to the Members of the Church of England, and to Proteſtant Trinitarians in general, exhorting

For every thing that relates to this buſineſs, the ſubſequent trial of William Frend in the vice-chancellor's court for publiſhing a pamphlet entitled "Peace and Union," his very able defence, the ſentence pronounced, together with his appeal to the Court of King's Bench, &c. the reader is referred to two very intereſting works, entitled "An Account of the Proceedings in the Univerſity of Cambridge, againſt William Frend, M. A. Fellow of Jeſus-College:" and a "Sequel" to theſe Proceedings, ſince publiſhed.

The connection of theſe univerſity-proceedings with the memoirs of Robinſon, ariſes from William Frend's ſubſequent friendſhip with him. He became a pretty conſtant attendant at Robinſon's meeting, eſtabliſhed a theological lecture at a private houſe in the town, and occaſionally delivered expoſitory diſcourſes at Fen-Stanton, in Huntingdonſhire, in a meeting room belonging to John Curwan. Curwan is a very worthy diſſenting miniſter, an old ac

ing them to turn from the Worſhip of three Perſons to the Worſhip of the True God." A Second Addreſs, alſo, was publiſhed by him on the ſame ſubject. He alſo publiſhed "Coulthurſt's Blunders expoſed, or a Review of ſeveral Texts, that Mr. Coulthurſt lately produced in his Sermon before the Univerſity of Cambridge, as proofs of the eſtabliſhed Doctrine of the Trinity."

quaintance

quaintance of Robinſon's, who had lately embraced the doctrine of the unitarians.

Robinſon's connection with Frend, and with others, maintaining ſimilar tenets, tended probably to confirm his convictions, and to incline him to adopt a more decided tone, as to doctrines, in his public diſcourſes; though he remained, to the laſt, rather a friend to liberty, than to preciſion of religious ſentiment, or to ſtrict theological language.

Robinſon's obligations to ſeveral members of the univerſity were at this period not inconſiderable: and to their friendſhip, he was indebted for the free uſe of books in the public library, which much facilitated his literary inquiries, and enabled him to complete his two elaborate hiſtories. The following extract of a letter to his reſpected friend Daniel Turner affords a proper opportunity of introducing their names in a connection more natural, perhaps, than in the preceding controverſy.

Our author is giving a kind of Journal of his literary engagements, a practice he was much accuſtomed to in letters to confidential friends.

" *October* 8, 1788.

" . . . . . Lord's day. After ſervice Frend, Barham,

Barham, Paulus, Dyer, another, and myſelf, drank tea with the venerable Mr. Tyrwhitt. He is the grandſon of Gibſon, biſhop of London, and ſtood full in the path to preferment: but conſcience forbad: he reſigned all, even his fellowſhip, and now lives in college, as in an hotel, a tranquil life of literary labour, and univerſal beneficence. Here I procured a MS. which Mr. Frend had taken out of the public library for me. We ſupped at Cheſterton, every hour receiving ſome new information.

"*Monday.* With the utmoſt regret, parted with Barham to Oxford, and Paulus to Germany.

May peace attend the path they go,
And light their ſteps ſurround.

"Spent the day in examining an ancient MS. of the New Teſtament of Wickliffe, lent me that morning by Mr. Frend, fellow of Jeſus, out of the cabinet of Jeſus library," &c. . . . .

Of moſt of the perſons alluded to, in the preceding letter, mention has been made before, but it ſeems juſt and reſpectful, ſtill further to notice them, as Robinſon's friends lay not a little, at this period, among perſons of this deſcription, and on a variety of occaſions, he was much

much indebted to their civilities. On the benevolence of Robert Tyrwhitt, M. A. extended beyond the limits of Cambridge, on the liberality of his mind, and on the extent of his knowledge, it is unneceſſary to make any remarks. On various occaſions, our author was highly obliged to him for pointing out many ſcarce, and valuable books, both manuſcripts, as well as printed volumes, in the public library.

On the character of William Frend, M. A. as a man of learning and judgment, it is alſo unneceſſary to enlarge. Robinſon's obligations to him were of the ſame kind with thoſe to Tyrwhitt: and to his diligent and friendly attentions, the admirers of Robinſon's "Eccleſiaſtical Reſearches," publiſhed ſince the author's death, are much indebted, for that accuracy with which it was preſented to the public. The preſs was corrected by him, though no alteration was made either in the colour of the language, or ſentiment.

J. Foſter Barham had been educated in Germany, and, by his accurate knowledge of the German language, and literature, was able to furniſh Robinſon with many uſeful hints and tranſlations from German authors little known, which aſſiſted him in the ſubſequent ſelection of hiſtorical German writers.

Of this highly eſteemed friend of Robinſon's, it would be irregular not to ſay ſomething further. He is the ſon of a perſon of very large fortune, in Bedfordſhire, who died while he reſided in Hertford-college, Oxford, brother to the preſent member for Stockbridge. He at firſt was a ſtudent of Magdalen-college, Cambridge, and was a warm diſciple and friend, ſeveral years prior to this period, of Robinſon. He received ſome illiberal treatment at Magdalen-college, and afterwards entered himſelf gentleman commoner at Hertford-college, Oxford. The ſacrifices to liberality of ſentiment, and generous, diſintereſted affection, made by this worthy man, it would be unneceſſary to particulariſe. He is a perſon enamoured of retirement, and devoted to inquiry.

Paulus, a learned German, an intimate friend of Foſter Barham's, is a profeſſor in the Univerſity of Jena, a man of great critical ſkill, more particularly in the oriental languages, author of a learned work written in the German language, entitled, "A Philological Key to the Old Teſtament."

Barham, beſides other ſervices, tranſlated for Robinſon, from the German, ſeveral parts of Meiners' Hiſtory of Switzerland, which contained an account of a very curious ſect, viſit-

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ed by Meiners, that inhabited, with twenty-ſix teachers, the heights of Mount Jura, living as a ſociety of friends in peace and plenty, beyond all the barbarous refinements of extreme civiliſation, and the deſpotical arrangements of ariſtocratical ſubordination.

Paulus examined for Robinſon, at Oxford, two curious Syriac MSS. written by thoſe eaſterns, who inhabit Baſſora, on the gulf of Perſia; whom ſome call Sabeans, others diſciples of John. This account confirmed ſeveral parts of Robinſon's hiſtories, which he had taken from Aſſeman, and Ignatius a Jeſu. Robinſonal ſo received of Paulus from theſe MSS. ſeveral other articles of value, which illuſtrated a part of hiſtory, of which Robinſon ſaid, "no article of eccleſiaſtical hiſtory was ſo obſcure, and ſo much in want of elucidation."

Of James Lambert, M. A. burſar of Trinity-college, Cambridge, late Greek profeſſor; Thomas Fyſhe Palmer, B. D. and William Hammond, M. A. late fellows of Queen's-college, reſpectful mention ſhould alſo here be made. Theſe liberal-minded and learned men were ever ready to aſſiſt Robinſon with books from different libraries.

The latter years of Robinſon's life may appear

pear to many too haſtily gone over, ſuch uſually being the moſt intereſting, and the moſt fertile in diſcoveries. But the latter years of the moſt active ſpirits are frequently ſpent in retirement: and, as they become entirely domeſticated, we no longer expect that variety, which charms the admirers of biography. We are now rarely to look for Robinſon at ordinations and aſſociations, holding in raptures religious aſſemblies, or ſolving caſes of conſcience, and ſettling differences in churches; ſeldom to find him even engaged in what he moſt delighted, familiar lectures among his poor villagers. We muſt not, however, infer that his preaching was generally unacceptable: by no means: many of his Calviniſtic friends were ſtill proud of his ſervices, and cordially attached to the preacher: and among diſſenters more remote from orthodoxy, but diſtinguiſhed for their benignity, he obtained a new ſet of admirers.

With his congregation at Cambridge, he ſtill continued his miniſterial labours: by them his decreaſing popularity as a public inſtructor among many of the Calviniſt churches, was eaſily diſpenſed with: "He was, they ſaid, the miniſter of our choice, and ſtill is of our eſteem." Among the more valuable part of this ſociety he was admired to the laſt; and if he was leſs attended to by ſome former diſciples,

he obtained a more extenſive reputation, and gained a more general eſteem.

The truth is, he was now entering upon a large field of enquiry, and it became neceſſary for him to be a recluſe. We have already obſerved, that his hiſtorical enquiries were directed to a review of perſons, and to the inveſtigation of facts, diſperſed among different nations, diſputed by contending eccleſiaſtics, involved in labyrinths uncommonly intricate, and, by many, reckoned not worth the trouble of unravelling. In ſome caſes he had no guides; and in others, not ſatisfied with the ordinary conductors, he found it expedient to conſult guides more original, and better informed. He thought it neceſſary to learn the Italian, the Spaniſh, the Portugueſe, the German, with other languages. The memorials of remote antiquity, and the volumes of polite literature, that he not only curſorily peruſed, but minutely examined, and accurately digeſted, might ſurpriſe not only ſuperficial readers, but elaborate enquirers. The following Letters to a writer, among the modern Welch, (I ſpeak after two well-informed men*) the beſt acquainted with the Welch hiſtory, will explain this matter.

* David Williams, the political writer, and Edward Williams, the Welch bard, ſo deſcribe him.

" *To the Reverend Mr. Thomas, Leominſter, Cardiganſhire.*

" REVEREND SIR,

" About two or three years ago, a committee of our denomination in London deſired me to collect materials for an hiſtory of the baptiſts. Mr. Thompſon lent his papers, which I got tranſcribed; but when all put together, they are confined and unſatisfactory. I thought an hiſtory of the baptiſts might be traced through all the dark ages of popery; and laſt winter I addreſſed myſelf to the ſtudy, and made ſome progreſs in the hiſtory of foreign baptiſts; but, I confeſs freely to you, the greatneſs of the work diſcourages me, for I feel my incompetence. There is only one thing that induces me to perſevere. I have acceſs to the univerſity-library, and I am the only one of our brethren who can come at one of the national repoſitories, where books on all ſubjects, and of every price, are to be inſpected. I have had loads, and loads more I muſt have, if I finiſh the plan I have laid out. I find the Bohemian and Moravian baptiſts were many of them Arians, and ſome a ſort of quakers. The Poliſh baptiſts were Socinians,—the Tranſylvanians ſomething worſe,—the Engliſh baptiſts, at the reformation, were Arminians,—but all of them,

ancient and modern, were zealous defenders of the perfection of ſcripture, the rights of conſcience againſt tyranny, both civil and ſacred, and the abſolute neceſſity of evangelical purity, according to their own ideas of it. I am ſtrongly inclined to believe that the ancient Britons, who reſiſted Auſtin the monk, were baptiſts; but of what kind, in regard to doctrine, I do not know. I hope to come to this part of the hiſtory, and, indeed, finiſh the whole this winter. I think, if I publiſh it, it will be only under the title of an Eſſay toward an Hiſtory of the Baptiſts; and I think it will be compriſed, with authorities for all we advance, in notes, in one volume, quarto.

" I have been obliged to let your valuable papers lie till I arrive at that part of the hiſtory: and then I will return them with many thanks. I wiſh moſt heartily, before I conclude any thing about printing, that I could have the advantage of conſulting you, concerning the plan itſelf, and the manner in which it is executed. Your wiſe hand would ſtrike out foreign matter, and inſert both arguments and ornaments, of which I am incapable. Providence denies me that advantage; and I hope, if ever I live to publiſh this work, that you will treat it, as you do every thing elſe, with the politeneſs of a gentleman and the candour of a Chriſtian.

6 " R. Robinson."

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In another letter, he obſerves as follows:—

" Reverend Sir,

" I perceive baptiſts are of all ages, and all countries, and connected with a variety of ſubjects, of which I had no notion, till I went heartily into the buſineſs. Abſolutely we have no hiſtory, and we have ſuffered enemies to tell our tale. My collection will make about four thin quartos. The firſt is an hiſtory of baptiſm; the laſt three contain an hiſtory of baptiſts. The firſt is divided into eſſays, and they again into ſections. The whole is intended to contain an account of the riſe, progreſs, connections, corruptions, appendages, and reformation of baptiſm, and ſo on. The hiſtorical part begins with apoſtolical churches,—goes through the ſeveral countries of Aſia, Africa, and Europe, and ends with America. Our friends have ſaid, " Print." I will not 'till I have taken the opinion of a few wiſe and good men, on the propriety of ſuch a work. For this purpoſe, I have dipped promiſcuouſly into the middle of the firſt volume, taken out two ſheets, and ſtruck off twenty or thirty copies, one of which begs your acceptance. The only queſtion I take the liberty to aſk, is, whether, as may be judged by ſuch a ſpecimen, a work of this kind is likely to ſerve the cauſe? If not, I have done. Happy ſhould I be, if I could

conſult you, who have turned your attention ſo much that way.

" R. Robinson."

The above letters appear to fill this gap of hiſtory more naturally than the mere narrative of biography could have done, as they point out more directly his literary purſuits at this time, and are in themſelves valuable. But for this long introduction, and for the ſubſequent account of a hiſtory, deemed by many unimportant, and which if the baptiſts reckon intereſting, ſome of them do not reckon the moſt uſeful work of this learned writer, ſome apology, perhaps, ſhould be made. It ſhould, therefore, be known, that this is one of the moſt elaborate of our author's writings; that it is allowedly the moſt learned of any hiſtory extant on the ſubject; that it abounds with entertainment, as well as inſtruction, and, on ſome points, takes a courſe of enquiry, which, if it has been purſued at all by other writers, has not been purſued with equal ſucceſs. Of the merit of this work I have elſewhere given my free opinion: and, having delivered it when I was engaged in a courſe of reading, that enabled me to form a more accurate eſtimate of its character, than, perhaps, I ſhould at preſent, I ſhall ſtill treſpaſs on the patience of the reader in a ſubſequent chapter, and lay before him ſuch

ſuch remarks, as I at that time made. A ſhort analyſis ſhall firſt be given; the remarks ſhall immediately follow. In the work, from whence the critique is extracted, many other obſervations are made on the ſame ſubject. The Analyſis is borrowed from the Recapitulation at the end of the Hiſtory of Baptiſm.

CHAPTER XXI.

An Account of Robinſon's Hiſtory of Baptiſm.

TO this ſingular production we ſhall devote ſeveral pages.

The firſt chapter, then, attempts to narrate the origin of baptiſm; which, according to Robinſon, was an order of God, executed by John, in the little kingdom of Judæa, a province of the Roman empire, in the reign of Tiberius Cæſar. The ſecond enquires what baptiſm John adminiſtered, and ſhews that it was that of immerſion in water. The third treats of the perſons baptiſed, and attempts to prove they were only believers: and here Jeſus is introduced as Lord of a new œconomy. The two next proceed to enquire whether baptiſm were in uſe among the Jews before John, or among the Gentiles; and it is ſhewn that it was not, but was altogether a new and divine appointment*. The ſeventh chapter treats of the improvement of the inſtitution by Jeſus Chriſt. "He did not alter the ſubject, a believer; or immerſion, the mode; but he extended the commiſſion to baptiſe ſo as to include the gentiles of that age, and all mankind, who might become

* But that baptiſms were practiſed by Gentiles, ſee Otthonis Sperlingii de Baptiſmo Ethnicorum. Cap. iv.

his

his diſciples in future ages." The next chapter obſerves, that the congregations, collected by the immediate apoſtles of Chriſt, were baptiſed by immerſion, and that none but believers appear on this occaſion; and "here, ſays Robinſon, ends ſacred hiſtory, without exhibiting any infant, or any ſprinkling." The ninth chapter and two following narrate the Eaſtern, Roman, and Mahometan favourite practice of bathing; and the twelfth ſhews, that the primitive Chriſtians erected buildings for the purpoſes of ſacred bathing, and called them baptiſteries from baptiſm which they practiſed by immerſion there. The next four chapters deſcribe ſeveral baptiſteries, both of Eaſtern and Weſtern Chriſtians, and ſhew that their hiſtories are credible, and their conduct proper, only on ſuppoſition that they baptiſed by immerſion. The ſeventeenth chapter introduces artiſts depicting baptiſm, and unwarily obſcuring what they meant to elucidate. The next treats of fonts both natural and artificial, and ſhews that a confuſion of names introduced a confuſion of things, by which means the original practice of baptiſm became more corrupted. The baptiſm of infants, that is, of minors, ſo called in general, follows; and here it is to be obſerved, that the equivocalneſs of words went to add to the corruption of baptiſm. The next chapter ſhews that the weak fondneſs of parents,

rents, and the enthuſiam of the monks, helped yet more to corrupt baptiſm, by transferring to babes an inſtitute only proper for men.—The twenty-firſt chapter, and the two following, ſhew that Africa, the leaſt enlightened part of the Chriſtian world, cheriſhed the baptiſm of babes, and that Auguſtine, according to Robinſon, a pretended ſaint, but an illiterate hypocrite, brought it to perfection there in the fifth century; but the novel practice had no extent or duration worth mentioning. The next chapter ſhews how the Eaſterns depraved the ceremony, and brought it down gradually to children. Chapter twenty-fifth examines a pretended canon of ſome poor African monks, who, to ſupply their wants, imported African baptiſm into Spain in the ſixth century. The next chapter ſhews how the emperor Charlemagne impoſed on the Saxons a law for infant baptiſm, to ſerve the political purpoſe of enſlaving them and others of mankind, and how other deſpots copied his example, and turned the inſtitute of Chriſt into an engine of ſtate.—The twenty-ſeventh chapter accounts for the extenſive progreſs of infant baptiſm, by ſhewing how well it ſuited the intereſt of various claſſes of men, and the very corrupt manners of thoſe ignorant, diſordered, and barbarous times.—Next follows an account of ſeveral conſequences of making baptiſm neceſſary to babes,

babes, and exhibits the laſt ſtage of the corruption of it,—the practice of the baptiſing of infants unborn, who could not be immerſed, but might, by art, be wetted; and ſo the prieſts found themſelves obliged to affirm that moiſtening a part was equal to bathing the whole. "This vulgar, indecent, and barbarous farce is yet acted abroad, under the falſe pretence, that the wiſe and good ſovereign of the univerſe hath connected inviſible and eternal benefits, not with knowledge and virtue, but with the exerciſes of a prieſt, how ſilly and ſordid ſoever both he and they may be." However, "this whole ſyſtem, Robinſon continues, is conſiſtent with itſelf: if it be once admitted that baptiſm and eternal life are inſeparably connected; the neceſſity, and even the charity of baptiſing every living human animal, follow of courſe, and the doctrine is eſtabliſhed, that there is no ſalvation out of the church."—Baptiſm had been practiſed many ages, in divers countries, by all ſorts of men, and it had been connected with a great variety of other practices. Theſe connections are treated of in the two following chapters, and they imply, ſays Robinſon, that the inſtitute had been made very free with, to ſerve ſecular intereſts, by men, who had not regulated religion by its only ſtandard, the holy ſcripture, and that even theſe abuſes tell the original form. The thirty-third chapter

ter traces the hiſtory of aſperſion, and ſhews that the monks introduced from pagan rites the practice of ſprinkling holy water, which in the end was miſtaken for Chriſtian baptiſm. The thirty-fourth chapter treats of anabaptiſts; chapter thirty-fifth of the ſtate of baptiſm in the oriental churches. In the thirty-ſixth chapter, the mode of adminiſtering baptiſm in the eſtabliſhed Greek and Roman churches is explained; in the thirty-ſeventh, reformed baptiſm is examined. The thirty-eighth chapter exhibits the manner, in which baptiſm is adminiſtered by Engliſh, Dutch, American, and German baptiſts. Chapter the thirty-ninth preſents the true ground of action in religion: and the work cloſes with a review of the apoſtolical churches.

The following quotation will explain Robinſon's opinion of the primitive mode of adminiſtering baptiſm, which differs from the practice of the modern baptiſts: according to this mode he baptiſed ſeveral of his own family.

"The candidate (he obſerves) ſtood erect, and the adminiſtrator, while he pronounced the baptiſmal words, laid his right hand on the hind part of the head of the candidate, and bowed him gently forward, till he was all under water. Hence baptiſm was taken for an act

act of divine worſhip, a ſtooping, and paying of a divine homage to God. The baptiſed perſon raiſed himſelf up and walked out of the water, and another candidate followed,—the adminiſtrator ſtanding all the time erect in his place. This method hath more than antiquity to recommend it. It is ſo eaſy to the adminiſtrator, ſo perfect an immerſion, ſo diſengaged to the candidate, ſo free from giving pain to the ſpectators, a method ſo decent, and expeditious, that it is a wonder it is not univerſally practiſed. It requires for a middle ſized perſon, on condition of a proper genuflexion, which it is almoſt impoſſible to avoid making, in the adminiſtration, three feet of water, and for a very tall man, three feet and an half. There are, as was obſerved before, the remains of many ancient baptiſteries abroad, in which are various antiquities deſcriptive of this mode. The biſhop ſtood in the water; and the candidate, in his baptiſm, bowed forward under his hand, which is the meaning of Prudentius, when he ſpeaks of baptiſing the breaſt, and of Tertullian, when he ſays Chriſtians of his time were baptiſed, by bowing down with great ſimplicity, without pomp, and in few words. The baptiſt churches, it may be hoped, will forgive this animadverſion. It is the glory of their conſtitution, that an individual

dividual may propoſe his opinion, and that nobody is obliged to adopt it*."

The following remarks on this hiſtory are in the ſecond edition of my Inquiry into the Nature of Subſcription to the 39 articles, p. 419.

" As Robinſon's hiſtory is allowed to be the completeſt defence of the opinion of the baptiſts, and to contain much curious matter not formed into argument before, for adult baptiſm, I ſhall not quit this ſubject without making a few remarks on it. Independently then of the evidence brought in favour of the main object of his book, our author hath alſo, in part at leaſt, removed an objection brought againſt adult baptiſm, from an indelicacy in the form of adminiſtration, as practiſed by the baptiſts. For I think he has made it highly probable, that the primitive mode was for the adminiſtrator to ſtand in the water, putting his hand to the back part of the candidate's head, who alſo ſtood in the water, till he was wholly immerſed; though " demiſſus" does not, I own, neceſſarily correſpond to "demiſſo vultu, demiſſo capite†," &c. for demiſſus will apply to a perſon placed in, or let down into the water in any way. However,

* See Robinſon's Hiſtory of Baptiſm.

† Tertullian de Bapt.

conſidered

conſidered in its connection in Tertullian, Robinſon's account is, I think, moſt probable. For if the ſupine poſture had been practiſed, Tertullian ought rather to have uſed ſome ſuch word as attollitur. This account alſo, I think, correſponds moſt naturally with the ſtyle of the New Teſtament.

" The circumſtance of " being buried with Chriſt" determines nothing as to the mode; for it is well known that the perſons whom the apoſtle addreſſed, burnt, and did not bury their dead, as we do.

" What I have hitherto ſaid, all goes on the ſuppoſition that the baptiſmal form in Matthew is authentic. But in propoſing both ſides of this queſtion, I will conceal nothing that hath occurred to me. It is far then from being admitted by many learned men, that the baptiſmal form is authentic. Indeed the whole goſpel of Matthew has been thought by ſome judicious men, in the form we now have it, to be ſpurious. And a perſon of conſiderable abilities, and unſuſpected integrity, from conſiderations too minute to enter on here, has not ſcrupled to ſay, that ſome parts of Matthew it is impoſſible to reconcile with Luke; that he could produce ſuch internal marks of ſpuriouſneſs, as it would be impoſſible to confute; and

it is much to be desired, that he would bring forward his objections before the public, that they might be admitted or confuted*.

" However this be, it is certainly too hasty, to say (as Robinson does) that the authenticity of the baptismal form is allowed by all Christians, though this hath also been said by many eminent men. For though it must be admitted, that it is found in all the printed copies and manuscripts, as well as the ancient versions, yet to those who are disposed to doubt its authenticity, the following circumstances must have weight.

" I have already noted this singular circumstance, viz. that the apostles never baptised in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and the phrase is no where else used in the New Testament. Nor is this all: it is not mentioned in any of the writers, called apostolical fathers, (and I have examined every passage where baptism occurs) except in the interpolated epistle of Ignatius to the Philadelphians†; but as it does not appear in those called genuine, and it appears again in one acknowledged by all parties to be spurious, viz.

* This has since been done in a dissertation, entitled " The Dissonance of the Gospels." By John Evanson, A.M.

† Sect. x.

to

to the Philippians. This circumſtance proves more againſt it, than if it never made its appearance there at all. It is acknowledged, that it appears in Irenæus and Juſtin Martyr; but many things are introduced, foreign to baptiſm, and many doctrines inconſiſtent with truth. It may alſo be thought by many very much to reſemble the groſs interpolation of "the three witneſſes*," and to have been made in ſubſervience to ſome falſe ſcheme of doctrine. If to this circumſtance be added that in Mark xvi, the correſponding verſe†, where baptiſm is mentioned, is not found, at leaſt, in the moſt ancient and beſt manuſcripts, and that, in the other two goſpels it is not mentioned; it may be thought by ſome an additional argument, that Socinus and Barclay were not raſh in ſaying, that the apoſtles baptiſed with water, without any command from Chriſt, though theſe writers did not diſpute the authenticity of the text, but only gave it a figurative meaning‡. A writer, indeed, quoted by Robinſon, aſſerts roundly enough, "Petrus apoſtolus formam baptiſmi a Chriſto traditam in iſtam mutabat, Ego te baptizo in nomine domini noſtri Jeſu Chriſti‖." This is

* 1 John v. 7.

† See Wetſtein.

‡ Socinus de Bapt. and Barclay's Apology for the Quakers' Baptiſm.

‖ Ægidius Carlerius. See Robinſon's Hiſt. of Bapt. p. 41.

making Peter deny his maſter four times. It may be thought, perhaps, by ſome, that John baptiſed in the name of the Meſſiah, and that the apoſtles' baptiſm was nothing but a continuation of that rite. This was the opinion of Tertullian*. As to the perpetuity of this ceremony, the learned hiſtorian has certainly brought many cogent arguments in its favour. At the ſame time many powerful reaſons will preſent themſelves incidentally, and unintentionally, yet ingenuouſly introduced into his work, that wear no favourable aſpect on baptiſm.

" Having propoſed to myſelf to ſtate both ſides of the queſtion relative to baptiſm, and having previouſly ſpoken in high terms of the great expectation formed of Robinſon's Hiſtory†—juſtice to the ſubject ſeemed to require, that I ſhould attend to the force of his arguments, on the ſide of the perpetuity of this ceremony. Theſe remarks take nothing from the general excellencies of that performance, which, to thoſe who examine it, will be found to contain many curious reſearches into antiquity, ingenious illuſtrations of ſcripture, ſeveral articles in a high degree entertaining, and the nobleſt principles of moderation and liberty.

* Tertulliani Op. p. 229. de Bapt.

† In the Preface to my Inquiry, &c.

It,

It, indeed, is an extraordinary production. This tribute of reſpect I pay to the abilities of Robinſon, not from the partiality of friendſhip, but as juſtly due to the labours of a truly ingenious and learned man."

The preceding obſervations were written in the year 1791. Were I to write my preſent thoughts on this ſubject, I ſhould certainly ſay ſomething more decided. It would, however, lie out of the way of biography, to enter into ſuch diſquiſitions. The obſervations are left in their original form as accurate, ſo far as they go; but the author is no further intereſted in baptiſm, than as it concerns matter of hiſtorical fact, and of impartial biography.

Some have thought, that the diſagreements which took place between him and his brethren, might induce him to paſs over too lightly, both in his "Hiſtory of Baptiſm," and in his "Eccleſiaſtical Reſearches," the hiſtory of the Engliſh baptiſts. So it appeared to me on the firſt peruſal. I now think differently: his province was not to treat of modern characters; and though he poſſeſſed all the information that could be obtained on the Engliſh baptiſts, he procured but ſlender documents.

This appears by the following letter from

J. Thompſon, of Clapham, a perſon, as before obſerved, well acquainted with the ſtate of the Engliſh baptiſt-churches.

" Sir,

" I wiſh it was in my power to communicate any intereſting materials for an Hiſtory of the Engliſh Baptiſts; but I have the mortification to repeat to you, what not long ſince I wrote to Mr. Toulmin, on the ſame occaſion: That my papers furniſh little or nothing that can contribute to that purpoſe, ſave the number of our congregations, a liſt of which you have.—The truth is, our churches have unaccountably neglected to preſerve any records of the remarkable circumſtances of providence relating to them, and of 393 churches in England, ſcarce one of them can be traced up to its original formation; when I ſay this, I mean to except the caſe of ſeveral churches in Leiceſterſhire, and neighbouring parts, that have been formed within theſe forty years. Their hiſtory is ſo very remarkable, that, without reading any books upon the ſubject, or having the leaſt converſe or knowledge of any of our denomination, when their judgment was ſettled, they were greatly at a loſs for an adminiſtrator, and, at laſt, concluded, that a ſenior miniſter, though himſelf unbaptiſed,

ſhould baptiſe one of his brethren, and he the reſt. This account you have ſeen, and, if I miſtake not, you have a copy of it; however, as I tranſcribed and ſent it to Mr. Toulmin, I have no doubt, upon your applying to him, he will readily tranſmit it to you.

" J. THOMPSON."

Had I choſen to have further examined the origin and obligation of baptiſm, it might eaſily have been ſhewn that it was practiſed in the moſt ancient times, in India; and that ſeveral other ceremonies and doctrines, received by many Chriſtians, were religiouſly embraced, ages before Chriſtianity was known*.

* See Maurice's Indian Antiquities. Vol. v. Ch. iv.

CHAPTER XXII.

Obſervations on Robinſon's Correſpondents, in the years 1788, *and* 1789.

ROBINSON's correſpondents, during this period, furniſh not ſuch variety of particulars for biographical anecdote, as in former years: for though the letters received by him were numerous, yet they relate more particularly to one ſubject—Hiſtory: and the hints which they furniſh have either already been made uſe of; (for, as before obſerved, ſeveral have been brought together, not on account of their connection, in the order of time, but of their correſpondence in character); or will be rendered unneceſſary by the minute account given of our author's hiſtorical writings. And, indeed, as the moſt important tranſactions of the latter part of his life paſſed among books, they will be ſeen to the moſt advantage in his publications.

The only correſpondents, not already mentioned, whoſe names occur in his papers at this period, are, William Tomkyns, Abingdon, Berkſhire; John Hurford Stone, then of Hackney, Middleſex; W. Williams, Cardiganſhire,

ganſhire, South Wales; D. Brown, Calcutta, in the Eaſt-Indies; and Dr. Charles Stuart, of Edinburgh.

But of his correſpondencies in the year 1789, two are particularly intereſting, of which a ſhort account ſhall be here given.

The following paſſages are extracted from letters written to Robinſon from D. Brown, formerly of Magdalen-college, Cambridge, a Calviniſtic clergyman of the church of England, a very religious, and apparently a ſenſible man, with whom, when reſident at Cambridge, Robinſon was intimate. He was, and I believe ſtill is, chaplain to the garriſon of Fort William, Calcutta, and officiated at the Miſſion church.

Among Robinſon's papers is, alſo, the copy of a plan for a miſſion into ſome of the provinces of Bengal, which was communicated to him from Brown. It was preſented to Lord Cornwallis, then Governor-General; whether it was ever realiſed, I know not.

"My imperfect knowledge, ſays Brown, of a great variety of leading facts, will very much cramp my correſpondence; but of one particular branch,—the religious condition of the natives,—I have received conſiderable information. The

Mahometans make only about a ninth of the inhabitants of Bengal, who are chiefly Hindoos. The Bramin ſuperſtition, which it has been the faſhion to repreſent as mild and inoffenſive, is, as I have the moſt convincing evidence, extremely cruel, oppreſſive, and ſanguinary. As a ſource of depopulation, it is worthy the attention of the legiſlature:—the burning of the women, which has been ſuppoſed a very partial thing, is an extremely common practice. My very learned friend, Mr. William Chambers*, has computed, that about fifty thouſand widows are, in theſe provinces, burnt annually with their huſbands. Many of them are young and child-bearing, and might, by ſecond marriages, have been, upon an average, mothers of two children each. The three or four principal wives generally burn; and often the inferiors, compelled by diſgrace, and the exceſſive hardſhips they are inſtantly expoſed to, follow their example. In ſome few inſtances, this appears to be a voluntary act, but the majority are terrified into it."

The whole of this letter is curious, though too long to inſert here. The horrid cuſtom† alluded to above, though denied by ſome to be

* Author of various articles in the Aſiatic Reſearches.

† See an account of it, together with a plate, repreſenting

be now in practice, is too well eſtabliſhed to be any longer denied, and is noticed by Robinſon in his hiſtorical works.

Brown in what follows is ſpeaking of ſick perſons, who are left on the banks of the Ganges, to be borne away by the overflowing tide:

" They are (he ſays) ſwept away by the returning tide.—Some, however, eſcape—and as they can never be received back again to their own families, they aſſociate with thoſe, who, like them, have eſcaped the jaws of death.—There are two villages, not far up the river Hoogly, inhabited ſolely by thoſe wretched fugitives. They become a ſeparate community, and have children.—The Bramins can, as may ſerve their intereſt, devote any ſick branch of a family to death. And incredible numbers are made away with by this bloody ſuperſtition. —A gentleman told me, as he paſſed a place called Culna, a little above Calcutta, that he ſaw a ſet of Bramins puſhing a youth, of about eighteen years of age, into the water, and as they were performing their buſineſs of ſuffocation with mud, he called on them to deſiſt.

ſenting a view of it, in a publication written by an eye-witneſs: Hodges's Travels into India, during the years 1780, 1781, 1782, 1783.

They

They anſwered calmly—" It is our cuſtom—it is our cuſtom—he cannot live—our god ſays he muſt die." Then the operation went on, till the unhappy youth expired.—This is a fact, and thouſands here, of equal barbarity, might be collected.—Such, dear ſir, is the Hindoo religion, in ſome of its fruits. It is full of malignity, and all manner of abominations.—The temples are filled with dancing girls, whoſe hiſtory you know from books. I cannot ſpeak of their deteſtable rites. The old filthy ſyſtem of Paganiſm of Greece and Rome, is, in ſpirit, the ſame as that now in being among the Hindoos—and, perhaps, not leſs polluted, though it be ſomewhat more retired.—I am aſhamed to ſay, that my eyes have ſeen what I now teſtify. But unleſs I had ſeen it, my teſtimony would have been ſcarcely credible;—and I never could have ſpoken with ſuch abhorrence as I now feel.—I am fully convinced, that the Hindoos are without a ſingle moral principle, and that they are extremely cruel and malignant in their tempers.—So deeply corrupt are they in their practices, ſo tied and bound with chains of prejudice, and ſo wonderfully are they darkened in their minds, that every remedy muſt fail, but the knowledge of true religion."

On the back of one of our author's letters is a curious

a curious obſervation, extracted from ſome modern journal, but little known. The place, however, alluded to, muſt unqueſtionably be Cannonor, on the Malabar coaſt, not Patna*.

" A gentleman, lately returned from the Eaſt-Indies, and who was very curious in his obſervations there, informs us, that ſome years ago there was a republic of Jews at the city of Patna, the capital of the kingdom of Bahar, who were once ſo numerous, that they could reckon about 60,000 families, which are now reduced to 4000. They have a ſynagogue near the Nabob's palace, in which theſe records are kept, engraven on copper-plates, in Hebrew characters: ſo that theſe Jews pretend they can ſhew their own hiſtory from the reign of Nebuchadnezzar to the preſent time. The above-mentioned race of Jews declare themſelves to be of the tribe of Manaſſeh, a part whereof was, by orders of that haughty conqueror, Nebuchadnezzar, carried to the eaſternmoſt province of his large empire, which extended to the Indus, whence theſe Jews removed to the Ganges; and, this journey, 20,000 of them travelled in three years from their ſetting out of Babylon. An abſtract of

* See the Indian Antiquities, vol. ii. by the ingenious Thomas Maurice, who follows Hamilton.

their

their hiſtory has been tranſlated from the Hebrew, and may be of ſervice to the learned world."

The other correſpondent was Dr. Stuart, a phyſician of Edinburgh, who engaged in a work, in which he requeſted Robinſon's aſſiſtance. It related to the hiſtory of the Browniſts†, among whom the learned Ainſworth made a conſpicuous figure, ſo far as his oppreſſors allowed him to be conſpicuous. Some points of the hiſtory of the Browniſts have been inaccurately and ſuperficially treated of by Hume, Moſheim, Macklayne, and particularly by Baylie. Robinſon's letters are curious, though to dwell on them here would be tedious.—Two paſſages, however, ſhall be quoted, as they rectify ſome miſtakes, and may be of uſe to perſons engaged in this part of hiſtory. Robinſon writes to Dr. Stuart, as follows:

" I think you have very properly characteriſed Baylie. He is not to be truſted: for ſome of his pretended facts are not true; and his reaſoning from them, ſuppoſe they were true, is jejune and inconcluſive. He reports hearſays of " gracious miniſters;" but if grace

† For an account of Robert Browne, the founder of this ſect, ſee Biog. Brit.—Robinſon furniſhed many materials for that article.

be

be not an habit of ſpeaking the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, I hold it an unmeaning word, ſtanding for nothing in an evidence. Grace with Baylie was zeal for preſbyterian tyranny; and inſpire a man with that, and you inſtantly put to death impartiality and moderation, eſſential qualities in an hiſtorian.

" The riſe of Browniſm, I think, ought to be placed before 1570, the thirteenth of Eliſabeth; for George Gyffard, " miniſter of God's word at Maldon," who publiſhed his " Plaine Declaration that our Browniſts be full Donatiſts," has theſe words, page 1, 2. " Now there is a ſect in England, commonly called Browniſts, becauſe Browne was the firſt original of it; but, for all that, he hath written and publiſhed bookes in maintainance and enlargement thereof, and with more ſkill and learning, than others which either as yet have followed, or gone before him. Many men thinke, that they be ſprung up but of late; but whereas, in very deede, it is well knowne, that there was a church of them in London twenty years paſt, and one Bolton was a principal doer therein, whoſe fearful end is not forgotten." John Smyth ſaid, in 1609, " Popery had the preſcription of a thouſand years againſt Calvin, but Calvin hath not had the preſcription of one

one hundred years againſt the ſeparation, nay I ſuppoſe not above fifty years." From Smyth I infer, that the Browniſts themſelves did not certainly know the date of their own riſe; and from Gyffard I infer, that they may be, at leaſt, dated 1570, when they were a church. I imagine Browniſm originated among the poor and illiterate, and that their obſcurity protected them."

CHAP-

CHAPTER XXIII.

Review of Robinſon's Eccleſiaſtical Reſearches.

DURING the laſt year of his life, our author purſued no new ſpeculations, and attempted few compoſitions. The whole of the volume on Baptiſm, except the Preface, and Recapitulation at the end, were completed before that period, and was originally intended as an introduction to a larger undertaking. The latter has ſince appeared under the title of "Eccleſiaſtical Reſearches." Theſe were our author's two favourite works, and to the ſevere application, with which he engaged in them, he fell an untimely ſacrifice.

Beſides thoſe depreſſions, that proceed from a conſtitution, broken by intenſe ſtudy, and haſtening to decay, he evidently laboured under ſome concealed diſtreſs, that conſumed his ſpirits. Many of his former friends too haſtily conceived it to proceed from the alteration of his religious ſentiments, from the loſs of popularity, from ſecret chagrin, and unacknowledged vexations. But ſuch are unqueſtionably miſtaken. His popularity was rather more widely extending, if it declined in a particular circle:

circle: and, on this account, he poſſeſſed cauſe for triumph; none for mortification.

Such as recollect, that Robinſon had a family, numerous and grown up—an income, ſlender and precarious—an heart, overflowing with benevolent ſympathies, and generous wiſhes,—that, by the uncertainty of human events, he was ſeparated from ſeveral of his former friends, and, in fine, that his domeſtic affairs were critically circumſtanced; ſuch may find various reaſons for his diſtreſs, inartificial and natural, without conjuring up imaginary diſtreſſes, ſuperſtitious dreams, and divine viſitations, the horrors of deſertion, and the gloom of melancholy. He was inwardly and inſenſibly languiſhing for ſeveral months before he died; and expired ſuddenly in his bed, at Birmingham, in 1790, having been invited to preach there for Dr. Prieſtley. On this affecting ſubject more will be ſaid in the ſucceeding chapter: for though his Eccleſiaſtical Reſearches were not publiſhed till after his death, it ſeems more in order to devote the following chapter to this elaborate work.

The following review and critique were written by me, for one of the periodical monthly journals, and printed ſeveral years ago: and as it contains a better diſplay of the work than I ſhould,

ſhould, perhaps, give at preſent, no apology will be neceſſary for introducing it on this occaſion. A few additions, however, are made; and the notes of authorities inſerted.

" Eccleſiaſtical hiſtory has been too long in the hands of ſome reigning party, ſo as to have led many to doubt whether this branch of literature has been treated with impartiality, or is, indeed, of any conſiderable importance. On the diſcovery of bigotry, they ſuſpected want of integrity; and amid the diſplay of ſelfiſh paſſions, they looked in vain for thoſe characters, which dignify hiſtory. The character of the church, they have ſaid, is a character of meanneſs, or eccleſiaſtics have not been faithful hiſtorians. The preſent volume will, probably, elucidate this matter, and lead to the ſource of ſome miſtakes, into which mankind have been hurried. . . . . This work is introduced with (chap i.) " Cautions neceſſary to a reader of eccleſiaſtical hiſtory." The firſt regards words, " which, the author obſerves, affect hiſtorical preciſion, both ſingly and in conjunction." This remark is exemplified in the words catholic, Chriſtian, hereſy, council, barbarian, baptiſm, ſchiſm, church, biſhop, deacon, canon, and ſacrament, which have been uſed by hiſtorians, loſing ſight of the original meaning, in

the ſenſes affixed to them in their own communities; by an inattention to which diſtinction, the ear has been beguiled by ſound, and the attention led off from truth. The ſecond caution regards contradiction. Some have been ſtudious to reconcile contradictions, rather than to ſuppoſe hiſtorians guilty of known falſehoods. The third caution regards epithets, and falſe colouring, which miſlead by an injudicious application of terms. The fourth regards rhetoric, by which writers, in their ſimilitudes and ſplendid deſcriptions, have miſinterpreted paſſages of ſcripture. The fifth regards atteſtation. Some tales, the author obſerves, are abſolutely impoſſible,—others improbable,—ſome manifeſtly falſe,—others, though true, et nothing to the purpoſe. Caution the ſixth regards ſpurious writings.

"The obſervations relative to the firſt and ſecond cautions are illuſtated by references to the following authors:—Gerard John Voſſius*, Ludovicus Antonius Muratori†, Sanctus Gregorius‡, and Fredegarius; the venerable Bede§,

* De Hiſtoricis Latinis, lib. ii. cap. xxx.

† Rerum Italarum Scriptorum variorum Collectio. Ejuſdem Antiquitates Ital. Medii Ævi.

‡ S. Gregorii Turonenſis Epiſc. opera et Fredegarii Epitome et Chronic. cum ſuis continuatoribus, et aliis Antiq. Monumentis, ex edit. *Theodor. Ruinart.*

§ Bedæ Hiſt. Eccleſ.

Sandius,

Sandius *, Sigonius †, Schottus ‡, Saenz D'Aguirre §, Pacianus, Cave, Valesius ‖, Dr. Allix, Dr. King, Dr. Lardner ¶, Theodoricus **, Benedictus ††, Bonizon ‡‡, Julian §§, Godofridus ‖‖, Le Clerc ¶¶, Dr. Geddes.***

"The third and fourth cautions are illustrated from Cyprian †††, and Le Clerc ‡‡‡. The fifth and sixth, from Epiphanius §§§, Muratori ‖‖‖, Johan Bale ¶¶¶, Lardner ****, Captain Cook ††††, and Turner ‡‡‡‡.

* Ch. Chr. Sandii Nucleus Hist. Eccles.

† De Regno Italiæ.

‡ Andreæ Schotti Hispania Illustrat.

§ Joh. Saenz d'Aguirre Concil. Hispan. Collectio.

‖ Hadriani Valesii Hist. Franc. apud eundem.—Dr. Allix's History of the Churches of Piedmont.—Dr. King's Rites of the Greek Church.

¶ History of the Heretics of the two first Centuries, book i. sect. ii.

** Theodorici Regis Edict. Præf.

†† Benedicti Presb. Vita Damasi.

‡‡ Bonizonis Episc. Sutrini Libel. de Sacramentis.

§§ Julian. Imp. op. Cæsares. Κατ Ηαλιν Ενοχος.

‖‖‖ Godofrid. Viterb.

¶¶ Io. Clerici Ars Critica, cap. xiv.

*** Dr. Michael Geddes' Misc. Tracts vol. ii.

††† Cyprianus De Unitate Ecclesiæ, N. 15.

‡‡‡ Jo. Clerici Art. Critic. cap. xv.

§§§ Epiphanii Hæres. xxvi.

‖‖‖‖ Antiq. Ital. tom. iii. diss. xliv. p. 927.

¶¶¶ Johan Bale Mysterye of Iniquitye, MDXLI.

**** Sect. xiii. Basilides.

†††† Voyage towards the South Pole, vol. i. ch. v.

‡‡‡‡ R. Turner on the Calumnies of the primitive Christians.

This volume is properly entitled "Eccleſiaſtical Reſearches." But the reader, who ſhould conclude it relates merely to doctrines or councils, to miniſters or perſecutions, would form a very inadequate notion of its merit. The author is led in theſe Reſearches into different countries, and different governments;—Judæa, Greece, Africa, Rome, Spain, Navarre, and Biſcay, the States of Italy, the vallies of Piedmont, Bohemia, Munſter, Poland, Tranſylvania. In the ſeveral chapters, each deſcribing a particular nation, are found many ingenious remarks on the geography, government, laws, antiquities, commerce, and natural productions of the country, as well as on the manners, and characters of the inhabitants. The author, however, by no means, loſes ſight of the leading object of his enquiries, or offers violence to the character of an eccleſiaſtical hiſtorian. We here preſent our readers with a ſpecimen of our author's manner in this reſpect. . . . . .

Chapter the ſecond offers a general view of the Roman empire, at the birth of Jeſus Chriſt, p. 12.

"Before we enter," ſays this learned man, "into the particular ſubject of the volume, which is eccleſiaſtical hiſtory, it cannot be improper or uninſtructive to take a tranſient view,

both of the ſtate of the Roman empire and Judæa, at the birth of the Meſſiah.

"The ancient Roman empire was a moſt magnificent object. It exceeded, in length, above three thouſand miles, from the river Euphrates in the eaſt, to the weſtern ocean. In breadth it was more than two thouſand miles; and the whole conſiſted of above ſixteen hundred thouſand ſquare miles. This vaſt extent was divided into provinces, and within it were contained Spain, Gaul, the greater part of Britain, Italy, Rhætia, Noricum, Pannonia, Dalmatia, Mœſia, Dacia, Thrace, Macedonia, Greece, Aſia Minor, Syria, Phœnicia, Paleſtine, Egypt, Africa, and the Mediterranean with its iſlands. This extended territory lay between the twenty-fourth, and fifty-ſixth degree of northern latitude, and the moſt deſirable part of the temperate zone, and in general produced all the conveniences and luxuries of life *.

"An object of ſuch amazing magnitude preſents to the eye a vaſt aſſemblage of materials, each conſiderable in different views, and all replete with information. The chief article now to be obſerved, is, the original principle of go-

* Rollin's Roman Hiſtory.—Hooke's Roman Hiſtory.—Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.

vernment; for hiſtorians, ancient and modern, have remarked, that through all the various changes of the modes of governing at Rome, the primary inſtitutes of the policy of Romulus were the baſes on which the whole fabric, in all its forms, was erected *. Under all the fine tales of the firſt Roman fabuliſts, and the gloſſy colouring of their laſt orators, it is too evident, that enthuſiaſm and injuſtice were the principles on which the whole mighty empire roſe; enthuſiaſm, for the founders pretended a divine commiſſion; and injuſtice, for, leaving arts and ſciences to others, they made the government of the world the ſole poſſeſſion of the ſtate †. Theſe ſtamina of government, from ſmall beginnings, therefore, may be traced through a regular ſeries of perſonal quarrels, domeſtic broils, ſkirmiſhes with their neighbours, conqueſt of provinces, and civil wars, to abſolute empire veſted in one ſingle man. The ſtory begins with Romulus and Remus, twin brothers, one of whom acquired the abſolute maſtery over the little village of Rome, by conſulting gods, and putting his brother to death; and it proceeds to Cæſar, whoſe ambition of abſolute dominion cauſed the death of a million of the human ſpecies, as well as his

* Rollin. Preface to vol. i.

† Ciceron. Tuſc. Quæſt. iv. 1.—Hooke, vol. i. b. i. c. i. v. ch. ii. 1.—Virg. Æneid. vi.

own aſſaſſination. Him Auguſtus ſucceeded; and during his reign, and the reign of a few of his ſucceſſors, pomp and proſperity held imperial power in awe; but in due time, the ſame luſt of dominion that had extended the empire, cauſed the decline and fall of it. The empire was increaſed by a love of dominion over foreigners, and when there were no more foreigners to ſubdue, it was diminiſhed and deſtroyed by a luſt of power over one another; and in both, the dread of modern free governments, a ſtanding army, was the palladium of the ſtate. The military eſtabliſhment, while Rome was in the ſummit of power, conſiſted of more than four hundred and fifty thouſand men: a military power, as an elegant modern writer has obſerved, which, however formidable it may ſeem, was equalled by a monarch of the laſt century, (Lewis XIV.) whoſe kingdom was confined within a ſingle province of the Roman empire *."

Robinſon then proceeds to conſider the number of the inhabitants, their policy as conquerors, and governors, their religion, and miniſters of ſacred things,—the curetes,—flamens,—celeres,—augurs,—veſtals,—ſalii,—feciales, and pontiffs. . . . . .

In like manner, in chapter iii. which pre-

* Gibbon, vol. i. chap. i.

ſents a general view of Judæa at the birth of Jeſus Chriſt, he conſiders the extent of its territory: its hiſtory and government; and the ſix-fold diviſion of its hiſtory, patriarchal, moſaical, regal, ſervile, royal-pontifical, and provincial: of each period he gives an elaborate account.

He then, in chapter iv. takes a view of the new œconomy introduced by John the Baptiſt, and the ſtate of the world at the time of its introduction, adding ſome reflections on the character of John. . . . . That our readers may form an idea of our author's ſtyle and general manner, we proceed to lay before him a few extracts from the body of the work. The following curious paſſage (chapter vi. p. 42.) is taken from the hiſtory of the Greek church.

" The author of the Alexandrian or Paſchal Chronicle, who wrote about the middle of the fourth century, ſays, in the year thirty-nine, the evangeliſt Mark preached the word of Chriſt to the people of Alexandria, and firſt formed a church there, over which he preſided two and twenty years*. An annaliſt of after times, ſays, in the fourth year of Domitian,

* Chronicon Paſchale, ſeu Chronic. Alexandrin. cur. et ſtud. Dufreſne.

the

the firſt pontiff, or high-prieſt of the Church of Alexandria, the immediate ſucceſſor of Mark the apoſtle, being dead, Abilius ſucceeded him, and became the ſecond biſhop of Alexandria*. This is an amendment: but who, or what was this firſt pontiff of the noble city of Alexandria, who had the honour to precede Abilius, and to ſucceed the holy apoſtle St. Mark? It ſeems he was high-prieſt of a cobbler's ſtall. The ſtory is, and it is not improbable, that Mark had the misfortune, as he was walking along a ſtreet of Alexandria, to burſt the ſtitching of his ſhoe, ſo that he could not proceed till it was repaired†. The neareſt cobbler was the man. He mended the ſhoe, or ſandal, or whatever it was. This brought them acquainted. The man was taught the goſpel by St. Mark, and being a man of good abilities, he taught others; and this was the firſt pontiff of Alexandria, that is, the firſt regular teacher of a few poor people at Alexandria, who, peradventure, had no other cathedral than a garret. A teacher of a primitive congregation in Alexandria is not to be confounded with a patriarch of Alexandria. . . . . The Chriſtian Greek orators go far beyond the hiſ-

* Joannis Zonaræ Annales, cura et ſtudio Dufreſne.

† Eutychii Patriarch. Alexandrin. Eccleſ. Origines, cum commentar. Joan. Selden.—Abrahami Eckellenſis Reſponſio ad Seldeni Comment.—Jaques Baſnage Hiſt. Eccleſ.

torians,

torians, and are the moſt dangerous of all men, and the leaſt to be truſted in hiſtorical facts. The facts at bottom are true, but they are ſo expreſſed, as to include a great deal of falſehood. It is not worth while to tranſcribe an oration, but hiſtory taken from the oratory of one would read in this manner*: "The glory of Ignatius appears by five obſervations. 1ſt. On the extent of his biſhoprick.—2ndly. The dignity of his electors.—3rdly. The difficulty of the times, in which he governed the church of Antioch.—4thly. The throne on which St. Peter ſat. And laſtly, the power of Jeſus, who committed this church to his care. St. Ignatius, the archbiſhop of Antioch, was intruſted by Jeſus Chriſt, with the government of a ſee, containing two hundred thouſand inhabitants. If it be difficult to govern fifty or an hundred men, what eminence of wiſdom and virtue muſt he poſſeſs, who governed a church of two hundred thouſand! This prelate illuminated all Syria; like the ſun, he roſe in the Eaſt, and ſet in the Weſt." The fact is this: Ignatius was one honeſt good man of a congregation of ſeveral other men as honeſt and good as himſelf; for the firſt churches were all [illegible]†. This man was born

* S. Johannis Chryſoſtomi Op. ex editione Bernardi de Montfaucon.

† Jaques Baſnage. Hiſt. Eccleſ. tom. i. liv. iii. ch. ii.

in

in the Eaſt, and died at Rome. He lived ſome time at Antioch, a city containing two hundred thouſand inhabitants, all whom he governed, exactly as, in the reign of Charles the Second, Jeremiah Ives, who kept a cheeſemonger's ſhop at the corner of New-ſtreet, and taught an anabaptiſt congregation in the Old Jewry, governed the city of London*. He illuminated all the Eaſt, that is, during his life, no body out of Antioch knew him; but after his death, ſome body publiſhed a letter in his name, which, for his honour, ought to be ſuppoſed a forgery. He was an archbiſhop; but he had no biſhops under him; and his congregation all aſſembled in one houſe during his life, and the lives of his ſucceſſors, for more than one hundred and fifty years after his time†. In this manner do the Greek fathers relate facts; and ſo much did this kind of narration take with the populace, that they named the man, who from the pulpit filled the city of Conſtantinople with ſuch grand ideas, John the Golden-mouth, or, in modern ſtyle, Saint John Chryſoſtom. Some hiſtorians tranſcribe what theſe fathers publiſhed for oratory, and give it the world as true hiſtory. Others, on the con-

* A Slap to a Lying Pamphlet falſely called Truth's Plea for Infants, lately publiſhed by Mr. Alexander Kellie, by Jeremiah Ives, cheeſemonger.

† Baſnage, ubi ſup. ſ. x.

trary,

trary, tax them with uttering wilful falſehoods. It ſhould ſeem that there is a bottom of truth in the facts; and the deception lies in the high-flown oratorical faſhion of reporting them. The eloquence of the ancient Greeks was chaſte, that of the age of the fathers proſtituted. As Chriſtians happened to live, and tell their tale, when this bad faſhion prevailed, they, without any intention to deceive, complied with the faſhion, and ſo diſguiſed the fact."

Speaking in the ſame chapter of the events that followed the firſt eſtabliſhment of a ſchool in Alexandria, he remarks as follows, p. 52.

"Some Chriſtians foreſaw the miſchief, which this ſchool would produce, and remonſtrated againſt it: but they ſoon ſunk into neglect, and contempt. Time, however, hath diſcovered, that their fears were not groundleſs; for from this intoxicated houſe proceeded, in a regular train, moſt of the evils that have ſince afflicted the church. Having laid down a double ſenſe of ſcripture, as a firſt principle, all the reſt followed of courſe. The four goſpels became hard books, and common Chriſtians could not find out the meaning, for that lay in the myſtical ſenſe: conſequently, the aid of the ſchool became neceſſary to inform them. In proportion as academics taught

taught in the churches, and were applauded, unphilosophical and illiterate teachers were slighted. The title and dignity of philosophers delighted so much these vain men, that they always appeared in the philosopher's cloak, so that a man, able to teach, was instantly known by his habit. The modest plain people retired, and kept at a distance. Some churches chose these superior geniusses, to teach them constantly, and called them from the school, to settle among themselves, and they returned the favour by introducing mysteries from which proceeded first disputes, and then councils of men of their own order to settle them.

"About the year one hundred and fifty, Theophilus, bishop of Antioch, first made use of the word, Trinity, to express what divines call persons in the Godhead: on which Mosheim, and after him good Dr. King, makes this just reflection, "The Christian church is very little obliged to him for his invention. The use of this and other unscriptural terms, to which men attach either no ideas, or false ones, has destroyed charity and peace, without promoting truth or knowledge*." It has produced heresies of the worst kind.

* Mosheim's Chronological Tables. Cent. ii.—Dr. King's Rites of the Greek church. p. 7.

"Every

" Every effect, produced by these causes, became itself the cause of another effect. Every church had its *haireſis*, or opinion, and it became of consequence to determine which was the right: for each teacher maintained his own with a great degree of gravity and obstinacy, which such a good man would not have done, if it had not been of the last importance to the salvation of his flock. To settle, then, the right *haireſis*, it was necessary for the churches to form a council of delegates; and who so proper to be elected as the bishop, the only one in the church, who understood the subject, and knew how to defend it? In these assemblies, delegated bishops perfected themselves in the art of wrangling, acquired a tone of authority, and practised airs of self-importance and dominion. Here, too, for order sake, it was necessary to appoint a chairman; and him time metamorphosed into an arch or head-bishop, and him again into a metropolitan, and the metropolitan again into a patriarch. Here, then, Christians lost their liberties. Here delegates became first the masters, and then the tyrants of the people. Here they determined their own *haireſis*, or heresy, to be the right opinion, or, as they called it, orthodoxy, and the opinions of others, to be only mere opinions unsupported by any learned arguments, and condemned to oblivion by the council, that is,

said

ſaid they, by the whole church, which Jeſus purchaſed with his own precious blood. It was an enormous compliment, that theſe gentlemen paid themſelves. "The goſpel," ſaid they, "is evidently divine, becauſe nothing but the miraculous power of God could ſupport it in the hands of illiterate men." As if they and their quirks were, to all ſucceeding ages, to ſupply the place of the miraculous power of God, &c.

Opinioniſts *, or, to uſe the Greek ſtyle, heretics, paid no regard to all this: they formed churches, taught their own doctrines, and held ſeparate aſſemblies every where. There were ſome, as the Nazarenes and Ebionites, harmleſs people, who mixed the rites of Moſes, or the traditions of the elders, with the inſtitutes of Jeſus: there were others, as the Marcionites, the Valentinians, the Carpocratians, and the Baſilidians, who mixed the oriental philoſophy with the doctrines of the goſpel; and there were others, as the Montaniſts, who deſpiſed literature, and whoſe rigid diſcipline was tinctured with enthuſiaſm. There was Hermogenes, a painter; Hierax, a bookſeller,

* Dr. Lardner's Hiſtory of the Heretics of the Two Firſt Centuries.—Thomæ Ittigii de Hæreſibus Ævi Apoſtol.—Johannis Damaſceni Op.—Photii Biblior.

and

and great numbers more, who followed their own convictions; taught churches, and probably were men of more zeal, than that moſt numerous party, who called themſelves the catholic and orthodox church, and who calumniated all the reſt, as heretics, who troubled the peace of Iſrael. It ought not to paſs unnoticed, that the learned Platoniſts "held it as a maxim that it was not only lawful, but even praiſe-worthy to deceive, and even to uſe the expedient of a lie, in order to advance the cauſe of truth and piety. The Jews, who had lived in Egypt, had learned and received this maxim before the coming of Chriſt, as appeared inconteſtably from a multitude of ancient records: and Chriſtians were infeſted by both theſe*.

Of the Euchites in the Greek Church, he obſerves, p. 58. 59, "This general parent-ſtock called Euchites, or diſſenters, it ſhould ſeem, was divided and ſubdivided by the clergy, into various claſſes of heretics. They miſrepreſented their doctrines, blackened their characters, and, as often as they could, excited princes to perſecute them. This was the meaning of the artiſt, who drew the emperor Andronicus as a horſe, with a bridle in his mouth, and Arſenius the patriarch riding on him, with the

* Moſheim, as above, p. 11. Cent. 2. chap. iii. ſect. 15.

reins

reins in his hand*. Some of theſe diſſenters dogmatiſed, as the eſtabliſhed clergy did, and they became Manichean, Arian, and Athanaſian Euchites. Others were named after the countries where they moſt abounded, as Bulgarians, Macedonians, Armenians, Phrygians, Cataphrygians, Galatians, Philippopolitans, or Popolicans. Others were named after ſome eminent teacher, as Paulicians, and Paulianiſts, from Paul of Samoſata, or, ſays the princeſs Comnena, from Paul and John, the ſons of Callinices. Novatians, Donatiſts, Artemonites, and many more, were of this claſs. Monarchian ſhocked the ear of an emperor, who knew no king but Cæſar. Melchiſedecian terrified prieſts, who knew no order of prieſthood, but their own. Bogomilian bliſtered the populace, who hated the thought of praying for themſelves: a ſimple Euchite, therefore, was a mere nonconformiſt, in Greece. A Manichean Euchite was a diſſenter of a doctrinal diſputatious turn: and ſo of the reſt; if, indeed, the words had any preciſe meaning at all, which contradictory accounts render very doubtful†. It would require the labour of a life, to inveſtigate, diſen-

* Nicephori Gregoræ Hiſt. Byzant. Pariſiis 1702. lib. viii. de Athanaſio Patriarcha.

† Johannis Cantacuzeni Hiſt. lib. ii. cap. xxxix. de Balaamo Monacho.

tangle, and elucidate the hiſtory of heretics: but every body knows, nothing is eaſier than to pick hereſy out of any book, not excepting the wiſeſt of all books, the ſcripture. Sometimes, it is ſaid, they rejected ſome books of ſcripture: that is, they were critics.

"Is a man the leſs virtuous, for refuſing to believe Solomon's Song divine? They are generally taxed with great crimes: but, is it credible, that vicious characters could do what they did, or ſuffer what they ſuffered? Why were they not puniſhed for theſe crimes, and not burnt for opinions? The truth is, they would not be governed in religion by any thing, except their own convictions. There is not a ſingle hereſy laid to the charge of theſe blaſted characters, which might not, with the utmoſt eaſe, be charged on the orthodox. Can any thing be more horribly Manichean, than to worſhip the devil? But had the works of St. Gregory Nazianzen been deſtroyed, and the titles only of his poems come down to poſterity, what might not have been ſaid of ſuch a liſt as this?

"A copy of verſes addreſſed to God,—another to Chriſt,—a third to his own ſoul,—a fourth

fourth to the devil,—a fifth to the ſame," and ſo on*."

In the hiſtory of Africa, Auguſtine is ſpoken of in the following terms, chap. 7. page 102.

"From this bitter and bloody fanatic of Africa, proceeded two hundred and thirty-two pamphlets, an innumerable multitude of epiſtles, expoſitions of the goſpel, and the pſalter, beſides ſermons, or homilies; and by this man's writings, did Luther, Œcolampadius, and other reformers expound the ſcripture, and frame an eccleſiaſtical conſtitution, to lead Europe into purity of faith and manners; as if Punic faith, and African manners, execrable at Rome, when Rome was pagan, were fit for ages enlightened by philoſophy and religion†. Inſtead of improving by all the great men that have lived in the laſt two thouſand years, ſhould the world continue to be the diſciples of Auſtin, and his ſpiritual ſenſe of ſcripture? He underſtood the ten commandments in a ſpiritual ſenſe, and "thou ſhalt not kill," ſignified, thou ſhalt not kill an orthodox believer. The command did not protect the life of an

* S. Gregorii Nazianz. Op. tom. ii. Pariſiis. 1680. Carmen Iambic. xvii, εις Διαξολον.

† Eman. A Schelſtrate Eccleſ. African. Diſſ. iv. cap. iv.—Melch. Adami Vita Lutheri.—Pellicani Vita.

heretic. This man and his maxims blaſted the character of chriſtianity, and excited in the minds of many of the moſt liberal of mankind, juſt ſuſpicions of the divinity of the religion of Jeſus; for the chriſtianity that Auſtin taught was the ſcourge and the curſe of the empire. If Jeſus employed him, as he affirmed, to teach occult grace and penal ſanctions, for not believing with, and even againſt evidence; the ſhame retreats from the obedient diſciple, Auſtin, and revolves on his maſter, Jeſus: but far, very far from every heart be ſuch a thought! It is impoſſible to defend both Jeſus, and Auſtin, and juſtice requires the ſacrifice of the latter."

Chapter X.—In the hiſtory of Navarre and Biſcay, the author, after giving, in his uſual manner, a deſcription of the country, and government, inquires into the origin of the Waldenſes, preſents a ſmall ſketch of their manners, general principles, and mode of inculcating them, and anſwers ſome difficult queſtions relative to their character. He narrates the hiſtory of Servetus, and expoſes the perſecutions which he experienced from the reformers, more particularly from Calvin, which ended at laſt in his death. The leading ſentiments of Servetus are unfolded to the reader, with part of a letter from Calvin, convicting him

him of Servetus's death. The following is Mr. Robinſon's opinion of the term Valdenſes, and preſents the diſtinguiſhing feature of a people, who have been deſcribed by very different and oppoſite characters, by Chriſtians of different denominations (p. 309). "The country of Vallenſes, called Valles, was the moſt beautiful and fruitful that can be imagined. It was filled with villas, towns, and inhabitants, begirt all round with mountains, and abounding with corn, olives, pines, and vineyards, enriching the vallies, embelliſhing the hills, and impregnating the air with effluvia of the moſt ſalutiferous kind: it was about twenty-eight miles long, and ſixteen broad*. The ruins of ſome Roman towns yet remain. At the foot of a cliff, called Mombui, are the caldes, or hot wells, which are now diſuſed, but the ſteps remain, and there are gratulatory inſcriptions of Romans, who recovered their health by bathing, by drinking the waters, and by the ſalubrity of the air. There is in this country one town, called Sabadell; and Mombui, juſt mentioned, perhaps took its name, as another place near Barcelona did, from its having been the reſidence of the Jews. The natives founded it Monjui, Jews-hill. In the twelfth century, many rich Jews had landed

* P. De Marca Lim. Hiſpan. lib. ii. cap. xvi. ſ. 11.

eſtates not far from this place. That the people called Valdenſes and Sabbatati originally inhabited this diſtrict, is the moſt probable of all conjectures: the firſt, a corruption of Caldenſes, or the inhabitants about the hot wells, or Vallenſes, the natives of the country; and the laſt, from Sabadell, one of the towns. Accident might give the ſame names to others; but theſe appear to be the only perſons, in whom all the characters of the firſt Waldenſes meet. It is not pretended, that the Piedmonteſe were not inhabitants of vallies: it is only obſerved, that they were not ſuch inhabitants of vallies, as old eccleſiaſtical hiſtory deſcribes.

" Little did the old Waldenſes think, when they were held in univerſal abhorrence, and committed every where to the flames, that a time would come, when the honour of a connexion with them would be diſputed by different parties, of the higheſt reputation. So it happened, however, at the reformation; and every reformed church put in its claim*; that of the Bohemian brethren will be examined in Bohemia; that of the Piedmonteſe, in Italy; that

* Matth. Flacci Illyrici Confeſſio Waldenſium.—Balthaſar. Lydii Waldenſis, tom. i.—Jacobi Uſſeri de Chriſt. Eccleſ. Succeſſione, cap. viii.—Allex upon the Ancient Churches of Piedmont.—Biſhop Newton on the Prophecies, vol. iii.

of

of the Albigenſes, in France; and, at preſent, it ſhall ſuffice to obſerve of theſe, that, in general, the claim of each is juſt, and, if properly limited, true; but there is one diſtinguiſhing character of the original Waldenſes, which none of theſe had, or had but faintly, and which eminently diſcriminated the people, firſt called by this name.

" The diſtinguiſhing feature of the primitive Waldenſes is the doctrine and practice of CHRISTIAN LIBERTY. The orthodox poſitively affirm, " they were not guilty of Manichæiſm;"—" yes, (replies the learned Limborch, than whom no man knew their hiſtory better) they were many of them Manichæans. It is not fair, (adds he) to deny a fact, which is as clear as noon-day*."

Chapter XI.—In the hiſtory of the church of Italy are ſeveral intereſting particulars relative to its revolutions and eccleſiaſtical hiſtory; to the ſtate of religious liberty, which, our author obſerves, was enjoyed for a long period in the greater part of Italy; and to the futility of the terms, unity, and univerſality of the church. The following is the character of the great Theodoric, who founded the Oſtrogothic kingdom of Italy, (page 370). Theodoric was

* Hiſt. Inquiſit. lib. 1.

a fine figure in his perſon*. His manners, acquired in his childhood at the polite court of Conſtantinople, were elegant and eaſy, at once diſplaying the dignity of his rank, and the goodneſs of his heart. He had not a tincture of literature; it was not the faſhion of the times: but he had a great fund of natural ſenſe, an exquiſite taſte for the arts, and was a patron of the ſciences and learned men; he was free from the vices of the princes of his age, and, in all caſes, he diſcovered a ſound underſtanding, and a love of virtue. He was deeply verſed in the politics of the times, and conducted all his affairs with the Greeks, the Romans, and the Goths, ſo as to preſerve peace, the glory of a ſtateſman. He went into Italy with the knowledge and conſent of the lawful emperor, and took upon him the government, not only with the approbation of the emperor, but with that of the ſenate of Rome. His valour was never doubted; but, after his throne was eſtabliſhed, he never took up arms, except in caſe of neceſſity, and always out of Italy†. His munificence was ſplendid, but wiſe. He erected many public buildings, and, ſays an exquiſite judge, "nothing is more remote from Gothiciſm, than all

* Ennodii Panegyr.

† Maſcov. Hiſt. of the Ancient Germans, vol. ii. book xi. ſect. vi.

the monuments of this king of the Oſtrogoths*." His court was the ſeat of weſtern magnificence, and his chancellor, Caſſiodorus, whoſe writings remain, is called by the French the Fontenelle of his age†. He was a ſincere lover of liberty. He preſerved it among all his own ſubjects by an adminiſtration of equal juſtice. He obtained it for foreigners, in their ſtates, by negotiation. He acquired it for ſlaves, by methods juſt and generous; and at one time he redeemed ſix thouſand captives from the Burgundians. He wanted nothing of an emperor, but the title, and that was in his power. This is the man, whom providence ſent to bleſs the weſtern world, as prophets had been anciently ſent to the Jews, to guide them into the paths of peace. The catholics, like the Jews, never knew the worth of ſuch a meſſenger of good. Orthodoxy, not liberty—hierarchy, not ſocial happineſs—ritual worſhip, and not virtue, were their objects: to obtain theſe, they conſpired againſt him during his life, and ſince his departure they hand his name down to poſterity, from book to book, under the odious appellation of Arian—anabaptiſt—perſecutor—enemy

* Groſsley, Italy, vol. i. Ravenna.—Rubei Hiſt. Rav. —Spicileg. Ravennatis Hiſt. apud Murator. tom. i.

† Magni Aurelii Caſſiodori, variar. lib. xii.—G. J. Voſſii de Hiſtoricis Latinis, lib. ii. cap. xix.

of

of God—blaſphemer of Chriſt—oppreſſor of the ſaints—an Agrippa—an Herod—a barbarian—and ſo on*."

In the Chapter that reſpects the vallies of Piedmont, he rectifies ſeveral miſtakes, into which catholic and proteſtant writers have fallen, particularly relative to the Vallenſes, Waldenſes, or Vaudois, as they call themſelves from vaux, or vallies.

In the hiſtory of Bohemia, Chap. XIII. the reader is preſented with an account of the reformation, introduced by John Huſs and Jerome of Prague—with the anabaptiſtical errors of theſe reformers, and their condemnation by the council of Conſtance, together with an account of that council—the hiſtory of the Taborites—the perſecutions of the baptiſts—and ſome remarks on the effects which the old feudal tenures had on liberty. This chapter concludes with a ſhort ſketch of the hiſtory of the Moravian baptiſts.

Chapter XIV.—As the hiſtory of the Munſter baptiſts, according to our learned author, has been miſrepreſented and vilified, he goes back to a period, prior to the diſorders that

* Vigilii Papæ Epiſt. ad Eutherium.

happened

happened in that city: to aſcertain their cauſe, he gives an intereſting view of the feudal ſyſtem, which had ſuch prevalence in Germany. He then relates the grievous hardſhips, which, in the ſixteenth century, oppreſſed the Germans—the events which encouraged the peaſants in an attempt to obtain their freedom—the inſurrections of the peaſants, and of others, all over Germany—and gives an account of the famous Muncer, with his manifeſto in behalf of the peaſants*.

Chapter XV.—On the hiſtory of Poland (which afforded the faireſt example of what lay neareſt his heart, religious liberty) our hiſtorian ſeems to have dwelt with peculiar pleaſure, and to have exerted his beſt talents.—The reformation gained ground in this country during the long reign of Sigiſmund, and was carried on, amidſt ſome interruptions, under Sigiſmund Auguſtus, who ſucceeded him: what follows is ſo much to the purpoſe, that we make no apology for quoting it at large.—Our author had been ſpeaking of Prince Nicholas Radzivil, firſt couſin to the queen, palatine of Vilna, marſhal and chancellor of Li-

* Johan. Angel. Werdenhagen de Repub. Hanſeaticis, p. i. c. v.—Moſheim, Eccl. Hiſt. Cent. xvi. ſ. 1. 22.—Hume's Hiſt. of England, vol. ii.—Robertſon's Hiſt. Charles V. vol. i.

thuania,

thuania, one of the moſt illuſtrious men in Europe, who encouraged the reformation in Poland, p. 563.—" The converſion of Prince Chriſtopher Radzivil, (continues he) couſin to Nicholas, and brother to the queen, is ſo ſingular, ſo well atteſted, and ſo much to the purpoſe, that it would be improper to omit it. This gentleman, being extremely ſorry that a prince of his family embraced that religion, went to Rome, and paid all imaginable honours to the pope. The Roman pontiff, being alſo deſirous of gratifying him in a peculiar manner, gave him, at his departure, a box filled with relics. Being returned to his houſe, and the news of theſe relics being ſpread abroad, certain friars, ſome months after, came and told this prince, that a man was poſſeſſed with the devil, who had been exorciſed to no purpoſe: they, therefore, beſought him, for the ſake of the unhappy wretch, to lend them the precious relics which he had brought from Rome. The prince granted them very readily; upon which they were carried to church in ſolemn pomp; the monks all going in proceſſion on that occaſion. At laſt they were laid on the altar; and, on the day appointed, a numberleſs multitude of people flocked to this ſhow. After the uſual exorciſms, the relics were applied. At that very inſtant, the pretended evil ſpirit came out of the body of the man, with the uſual

uſual poſtures and grimaces. Every one cried out, "A miracle!" and the prince lifted up his hands and eyes to heaven, to return thanks for bringing home ſo holy a thing, which performed ſuch miracles. But ſome days after, as he was in that tranſport of admiration and joy, and was beſtowing the higheſt eulogiums on the virtue of theſe relics, he obſerved, that a young gentleman of his houſehold, who had the keeping of that rich treaſure, began to ſmile and make certain geſtures, which ſhewed he only laughed at his words. The Prince flew in a paſſion, and would know the reaſon of his deriſion. A promiſe being made to the gentleman that no harm ſhould be done him, he declared ſecretly to the prince, that, "in their return from Rome, he had loſt the box of relics, which had been given him to keep, and that, not daring to divulge this, for fear of puniſhment, he had found means to get one like it, which he had filled with the little bones of beaſts, and ſuch trifles as reſembled the relics he had loſt: that ſeeing ſo much honour was paid to that vile heap of filth, and that they even aſcribed to it the virtue of driving away devils, he had juſt cauſe to wonder at it." The prince believed this to be true, and nevertheleſs, being deſirous of getting further light into this impoſture, he ſent for the monks the very next day, and deſired them to inquire,

whether

whether there were any more demoniacs, who wanted the aſſiſtance of his relics.

" A few days after they brought him another man poſſeſſed with an evil ſpirit, who acted the ſame part with him who had appeared before. The prince commanded him to be exorciſed in his preſence; but, as all the exorciſms which are uſually employed on thoſe occaſions proved ineffectual, he ordered that man to ſtay in his palace the next day, and bade the monks withdraw. After they were gone, he put the demoniac among his Tartarian grooms, who, purſuant to the order that had been given them, firſt exhorted him to confeſs the cheat; but, as he perſiſted obſtinately in it, ſtill making his furious and dreadful geſtures, ſix of them chaſtiſed him ſo ſeverely with rods and ſcourges, that he was obliged to implore the prince's mercy, who pardoned him the inſtant he had confeſſed the truth. The next morning the king ſent for the friars, when the wretch in queſtion, throwing himſelf at his feet, proteſted that he was not poſſeſſed, and had never been ſo.

" The monks, at firſt, beſought the prince not to believe this, ſaying, that it was an artifice of the devil, who ſpake through that man's mouth: but the prince anſwered, that if the

Tartarians had been able to force the devil to tell truth, they would alſo be able to extort it from the mouth of theſe friars. Now theſe monks, ſeeing themſelves put to it in this manner, confeſſed the impoſture, ſaying, that they had done all this with a good intention, and to check the progreſs of hereſy. But the prince offered up his hearty prayers to God, for having been ſo gracious as to diſcover ſuch an impoſture; and now entertaining a ſuſpicion of a religion, which was defended by ſuch diabolical practices, though they went by the name of pious frauds, ſaid, that he would no longer depend on any perſon for his ſalvation, and thereupon began to read the ſcriptures with unparalleled aſſiduity. In ſix months, all which he ſpent in reading and prayer, he made a wonderful progreſs in piety, and in the knowledge and myſtery of the goſpel. After which, he himſelf, with his whole family, profeſſed his religion in fifteen hundred and ſixty-four *."—Cardinal Hoſius, and others attempted to interrupt the progreſs of the reformation in Poland: it however ſtill continued to gain ground. King Sigiſmund himſelf ſecretly encouraged it, being inſtructed in theology, by Liſmaninus, provincial of the Franciſcan friars, and confeſſor to the queen's mother; and in civil polity, by the celebrated

* Bayle's General Dictionary, article, Nicholas Radzivil, note (e).

Fricz,

Fricz, the king's ſecretary, who at the command of the king publiſhed his famous treatiſe, " De emendandâ Republicâ."

The reformation was ſtill farther promoted by ſeveral diſtinguiſhed perſons at Pinckzow, and the Bible was publiſhed, under the patronage of prince Radzivil, in the Poliſh language. The baptiſts, however, were for ſeveral years expoſed to perſecution, both from catholics and proteſtants. The king appointed a ſynod to ſettle differences: but the delegates came to no agreement. The venerable Philipowſki was impeached, and the baptiſts met in two ſynods, to ſign an agreement.

Andrew Dudith Sbardellati was ſo ſtrenuous an aſſertor of liberty in the baptiſt church in Poland, of ſuch diſtinguiſhed talents and merit, and is yet ſo little known in England, that we cannot deny ourſelves the pleaſure of preſenting our readers with his hiſtory and character, p. 591.—" Andrew Dudith Sbardellati was the ſon of Jerome Dudith, a privy-counſellor of Ladiſlaus, king of Hungary, and a noble Venetian lady of the family of Sbardellati. He was born at a family-caſtle, near Buda, in Hungary, in February, thirty-three (ſome ſay thirty-ſeven). His father dying while he was very young, his uncle, who was archbiſhop

biſhop of Strigonia, perceiving he had all the talents neceſſary to make a great man, took care of his education. He was ſent to Breſlaw, then to Padua, and from thence to Paris, whence he returned home highly accompliſhed in literary and polite acquirements, and celebrated for his eloquence and virtue. He came into England with Cardinal Pole, whoſe life, written by Beccatelli, he publiſhed a few years after, in elegant Latin, with emendations, and additions, and a well-written preface. His youth and modeſty induced him to ſubmit it to Binardus, before it went to preſs. Next he went into Italy, and publiſhed ſome claſſical criticiſms, which were greatly eſteemed by the learned. Soon after he went to France, and the duke of Florence having given him recommendatory letters to Catharine of Medicis, he complimented her ſo politely in the Italian tongue, that ſhe could not help ſaying, "ſhe thought it impoſſible for an Hungarian to ſpeak Italian with ſo much eaſe and elegance." Every where admired and applauded, he went to the emperor's court, at Vienna, and, in ſixty-one, Ferdinand nominated him biſhop of Tinia, in Croatia, and ſent him ambaſſador to Sigiſmund, king of Poland. By the emperor and the clergy of Hungary, he was appointed their delegate to the council of Trent, where he made an oration in favour of the marriage of the clergy,

and another for the cup of the Lord's ſupper to be adminiſtered to the laity. He ſpoke with ſo much eloquence, that the legates wrote to cardinal Borromei, that though the orator had taken up time devoted to other buſineſs, yet the council was ſo charmed with him, that they did not perceive it, and had never heard any thing like it. The pope, afraid of his powers, got the emperor to recall him. Ferdinand did ſo: but having heard Dudith's account of what paſſed in the council, he approved of his conduct, and rewarded him with the biſhopric of Chonat, and ſoon after with that of Quinque Eccleſiæ, or, Five-Churches. Hence he returned into Poland, and continued ambaſſador from the emperor. During his reſidence here, offended with the immorality of courts, and the fopperies and ſuperſtitions of the church, he condeſcended to read the writings of Blandrata and Davidis, two noted anti-trinitarian baptiſts; and from them he received his ideas of religion, and became an heretic, though he never ſaw them. He reſigned all his preferments, married lady Sophia Straſſi, and, after her death, a ſecond lady, of the family of Zborowſky, and ſettled at Cracow, among the Calviniſts. The Pope excommunicated him, but he treated his anathema with contempt; for the emperor, for political reaſons, continued to protect him. He was well acquainted with ſeveral branches of philoſophy

philoſophy and the mathematics, with the ſciences of phyſic, hiſtory, theology, and the civil law. He copied Cicero three times over with his own hand. He had ſomething majeſtic in his face, and in the air of his countenance, though he was ſingularly modeſt, and baſhful as a lady. His life was regular and virtuous—his manners elegant and eaſy—and his benevolence warm and active. This character is almoſt all taken from thoſe who conſidered him as an heretic*:—in what terms would thoſe who knew him beſt deſcribe him?

" The liberal ſentiments of Philipowſki met the hearty approbation of Dudith: for he had laid it down as a maxim, that there was no ſin in a mere miſconception of the mind, and hence he inferred that men might think differently without injury to their virtue,—that conſcience ought to be left uncontrouled, and that no puniſhment ſhould be inflicted on pretended heretics. " It was this principle," ſays the continuator of Fleury, " that led him among the unitarians; for there," adds he, " he might ſay what he would on every ſubject." On this affair he wrote to Wolff, a divine at Zurich, to Beza and others, ſoon after this interview with Philipowſki. In his letters he deſires the Swiſs divines, in their

* Fleury, Hiſt. Eccleſ. tom. xxxii.—Sandius.—Thuanus, &c.

future epiſtles to him, to omit the pompous prelatical titles, which he had laid aſide with popery; but which they were ſo unacquainted with the world as to continue to give him in their addreſſes. He laments the condition of the reformed in Poland, " which," ſays he, " reſembles the chaos of the poets, heat and cold, wet and dry, contending for maſtery," and which he attributes in a great meaſure to their inflammatory letters. He endeavours to convince his correſpondents that there is no ſuch thing in any of their churches, as uniformity of faith, and that it is not in the power of man to produce it. He laughs at their creeds, and ſays, "They deſerve not to be called confeſſions, but confuſions." He ſhews the folly of appealing to fathers and councils, and the abſurdity as well as injuſtice of capital puniſhments. " Tell me," ſays he to Wolff, " my learned friend, now that the Calviniſts have burnt Servetus, and beheaded Gentilis, and murdered many others, having baniſhed Bernard Ochin, with his wife and children, from your city, in the depth of a ſharp winter; now that the Lutherans have expelled Laſco, with the congregation of foreigners, that came out of England with him, in an extremely rigorous ſeaſon of the year; having done a great many ſuch exploits, all contrary to the genius of Chriſtianity; How, I aſk, how ſhall we meet the papiſts?—With what face can we tax them with

with cruelty?—How dare we say, "Our weapons are not carnal?"—How can we any longer urge, "Let both grow together till the harveſt?"—Let us ceaſe to boaſt, that faith cannot be compelled, and that conſcience ought to be free *."

"Never was a finer pen than that of Dudith. With all the penetration of a man, who thoroughly underſtood the artifices of eccleſiaſtical politicians, with all the powers of wit, argument, learning, and liberality of ſentiment, he addreſſed, I wiſh we could add, and diſarmed, the godly perſecutors at Zurich and Geneva. "You contend," ſays he to Beza, "that ſcripture is a perfect rule of faith and practice; but you are all divided about the ſenſe of ſcripture, and you have not ſettled who ſhall be judge. You ſay one thing—Stancarus, another. You quote ſcripture—he quotes ſcripture. You reaſon—he reaſons. You require me to believe you. I reſpect you—but why ſhould I truſt you rather than Stancarus? You ſay he is an heretic—but the papiſts ſay you are both heretics. Shall I believe them? They quote hiſtorians and fathers—ſo do you. To whom do you all addreſs yourſelves? Where is the judge? You ſay the ſpirits of

* Socini Opera, tom. i.—Andreæ Dudicii, Johan. Wolfii, Theodor. Bezæ, &c. Epiſtolæ.

the prophets are ſubject to the prophets—but you ſay I am no prophet—and I ſay you are not one. Who is to be judge? I love liberty as well as you—you have broken off your yoke, allow me to break mine. Having freed yourſelves from the tyranny of popiſh prelates, why do you turn eccleſiaſtical tyrants yourſelves, and treat others with barbarity and cruelty, for only doing what you ſet them an example to do? You contend that your lay hearers, the magiſtrates, and not you, are to be blamed, for it is they that baniſh and burn for hereſy. I know you make this excuſe; but tell me, have you not inſtilled ſuch principles into their ears? Have they done any thing more than put in practice the doctrine that you taught them? Have you not told them how glorious it was to defend the faith? Have you not been the conſtant panegyriſts of ſuch princes as have depopulated whole diſtricts for hereſy? Do you not daily teach that they who appeal from your confeſſions to ſcripture, ought to be puniſhed by the ſecular power? It is impoſſible for you to deny this. Does not all the world know, that you are a ſet of demagogues, or (to ſpeak more mildly) a ſort of tribunes, and that the magiſtrates do nothing but exhibit in public, what you teach in private? You try to juſtify the baniſhment of Ochin, and the execution of others,—and you ſeem to wiſh Po-

land would follow your example. God forbid! When you talk of your Augſburg-confeſſion, and your Helvetic creed, and your unanimity, and your fundamental truths, I keep thinking of the ſixth commandment, "Thou ſhalt not kill." Farewell, moſt learned and reſpected Beza. Take what I have ſaid in good part, and continue your friendſhip to me." This is only a ſketch of a letter: but theſe hints may ſerve to ſhew the temper and turn of the man. The Genevan and Swiſs divines did not reaſon thus: they called the pernicious practices which Dudith condemns, "healing the wounds of the church."—The character of Socinus, in this chapter, is well drawn, and the influence which he had in promoting a liberal turn of thinking among the baptiſts.

This volume is a valuable ſupplement to the hiſtory of baptiſm..... To thoſe who value that performance, this, we doubt not, will be highly acceptable. It is, however, by no means to be conſidered as a ſecond volume of that work, it not being neceſſarily connected with it. That preſented complete the hiſtory of the ceremony, with many valuable articles connected with it; this, a hiſtory of facts and of men, with a few incidental remarks on baptiſm; and it is in our opinion more intereſting, and, in the main, better written than the former volume.

From the ſpecimens already produced, it muſt alſo appear, that this hiſtory is not a mere narrative of religious ſentiments. The author was evidently an unitarian in oppoſiton to an Athanaſian. It makes, however, no part of his deſign, to bring forward any favourite ſyſtem of religion. In deſcribing the hiſtory of various churches, the Greek, African, Roman, and Italian, he applies the term unitarian indifferently to what we now call Arian and Socinian. If he ſometimes expreſs himſelf ſeverely againſt catholiciſm and orthodoxy, ſo called, in the Roman and other churches, it is becauſe he finds them too often in connection with intolerance. He ſeems to conſider hereſy more in reference to conduct than doctrine, and has frequent occaſion to aſſert, with the excellent foreign lawyer, Boehmer *, the innocence of mere mental error, and the friendly diſcipline of the firſt Chriſtian churches.

"It will, no doubt, be thought by ſome, that our author's zeal in oppoſing ſuch, as aſſumed an undue authority in the Chriſtian world during the early ages, and ſuch, as in ſubſequent periods perſecuted on account of religion, leads him ſometimes to under-rate their abilities. To Auguſtine, the African, for example, Robinſon gives no quarter; he ſpeaks of him both in

* Boehmer. Jus Eccleſ.

this

this hiſtory, and that of baptiſm, as a fanatic, an enthuſiaſt, a profligate ſchoolmaſter, "who, after having picked up a few ſcraps of learning at Carthage, teaches what little he knew of grammar and rhetoric, at Tagaſte and Carthage." Unqueſtionably he was enthuſiaſtic, but, at the ſame time, he poſſeſſed ſuperior talents, and made conſiderable acquirements. To the truth of this aſſertion, his book De Civitate Dei yields undoubted teſtimony. Notwithſtanding this, the reader will recollect the part taken by Auguſtine, in eſtabliſhing a groſs ſyſtem of religion, and in exciting civil magiſtrates to perſecute ſuch as differed from him in theological opinions. Bayle, Le Clerc, Voltaire*, and others, are equally ſevere againſt him as a bigot and a perſecutor; and even his admirers muſt admit that he laboured under violent prejudices; that he propagated many abſurd opinions; that his reaſonings are inconcluſive, and his interpretations of ſcripture fanciful; that he introduced a falſe ſyſtem of logic into the ſchools; and that, under the ſanction of his name, the ſcholaſtic philoſophy

* See particularly Bayle's General Dictionary; Life of Auguſtine;—and Le Clerc's Letter to a friend in England, prefixed to the Engliſh tranſlation of his Supplement to Dr. Hammond's Paraphraſe;—and Voltaire's Treatiſe on Toleration; Poſtſcript.

obtained

obtained a dangerous pre-eminence in the middle ages*.

In expoſing intolerance, our author ſhews no partiality to favourite characters: whether he traces its ſteps to Calvin, to Beza, or to Socinus, men, whoſe talents, on other accounts, he is ever forward to admire, intolerance never meets with quarter from Robinſon. We cannot forbear obſerving, that, in the hiſtory of Poland, he has, by no means, accurately† ſtated the grounds, or characteriſed the peculiarities of Socinianiſm; nor given the true reaſon for the unpopularity of the doctrine.

Though ſeveral coarſe and inelegant expreſſions occur in this volume, it notwithſtanding diſplays great command of language, perſpicuity and ſpendour of deſcription, ſtrength and dignity of ſentiment. To the praiſe of learning, induſtry, and originality, it is certainly entitled. In juſt notions of government, and of religious liberty, it, perhaps, is not ſurpaſſed.

This hiſtory, as before hinted, though all

* See Enfield's Hiſtory of Philoſophy, vol. ii. drawn up from Brucker's Hiſtoria Critica Philoſophiæ.

† Eccleſiaſtical Reſearches, ch. xv. Vid. Socini Op. inter Fratres Polonos.

written

written before his death, was not publiſhed till after. Notwithſtanding ſome blemiſhes, I have not the ſhadow of a doubt, that it affords more original information, by far, on many topics, than any eccleſiaſtical hiſtory in our language. Had ſome Right Reverend Warburton produced as able a performance in defence of eccleſiaſtical hierarchies, as this diſſenting miniſter has in favour of nonconformity, what ſplendid encomiums would it have obtained from the prieſthood*! But a prelate ſupporting the church, and a diſſenter undermining it, are very different characters. The former appears like the ſun in its meridian luſtre: the laſt is viewed under an eclipſe †.

* It is not intended to intimate, that this work has not been highly commended; but to criminate the fulſome panegyrics on ſuch ſyſtems of ſophiſtry as "The Alliance." Francis Plowden, in his late learned work, "Church and State, or an Enquiry into the Origin, Nature, and Extent of Eccleſiaſtical and Civil Authority, with Reference to the Britiſh Conſtitution," proves "The Alliance" a farrago of erudition and ignorance, of faith and infidelity.

† —— Λογος γαρ εκτ' αδοξουντων ιων,
Κἀκ των δοκουντων, αυτος ου τ'αυτο σθενει.
Eurip. Hecuba, v. 290.

The ſame diſcourſe obtains not equal praiſe,
Advanc'd by Non-cons, and Right Reverend Prieſts.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XXIV.

Robinſon's Death;—Review of his Character;—Monody on his Death;—and Teſtimonies to his diſtinguiſhed Merit.

WE now come to the cloſing ſcene of this great man's life;

> The port of calms, that ſtate of eaſe,
> From the rough rage of ſwelling ſeas.
>
> DR. PARNELL,

It has already been hinted, that Robinſon died at Birmingham. Having been for ſome time in a declining and dejected ſtate, it was hoped, by his family, that a journey to this place, and an interview with Dr. Prieſtley, which he had long deſired, would have proved beneficial to his health and ſpirits. The phyſician approved the intended journey, though, on account of the preſent languor of his patient, he wiſhed it to be deferred. On Wedneſday, June 2, he ſet off from Cheſterton, and travelling by ſlow ſtages, in an open chaiſe, on Saturday evening he arrived at Birmingham. This was in the ſummer of 1790.

It does not appear, that he entertained any apprehenſion of his approaching diſſolution,

when at Birmingham, though he felt himſelf a different man from former times; for to one introduced to him, he addreſſed himſelf in this ſingular manner, "You are only come to ſee the ſhadow of Robert Robinſon." Notwithſtanding, he ventured to preach twice on the Sunday,—at the new-meeting, in the morning, and in the evening, at the old. Dr. Prieſtley was charmed with his facetiouſneſs in converſation (for his ſprightlineſs he ſeems to have retained to the laſt), but confeſſed himſelf much diſappointed with his preaching. "His diſcourſe," he ſays, "was unconnected and deſultory; and his manner of treating the trinity favoured rather of burleſque, than ſerious reaſoning. He attacked," continues this ingenious and learned man, "orthodoxy more pointedly and ſarcaſtically, than I ever did in my life."

The truth is, Robinſon was now a dying man: his bodily ſtrength was exhauſted—his intellectual faculties were weakened and impaired:—but retaining ſtill his ſecret diſlike againſt the rigid notions of bigots, and addreſſing a congregation, with whom, in many points, he ſeemed to have accorded in ſentiment, he gave the freeſt ſcope to his opinions, and, perhaps, wiſhed to recommend himſelf to his new friends. Be this as it may, the impreſſion left on Dr. Prieſtley's

Prieſtley's mind, both by his converſation and preaching, was, that Robinſon was of the unitarian faith, and had received conſiderable light from his own theological writings.

On the Monday evening he was ſeized with great difficulty of breathing, a complaint with which he had ſome time been troubled; but on Tueſday he diverted the company with his uſual vivacity, and appeared not to think himſelf in danger: at night he ate his ſupper with a good appetite, and retired to reſt without the leaſt complaint. Of death Robinſon was not afraid: but the act of parting with his family and friends always appeared to him very diſtreſſing, becauſe afflictive to ſuch as were left behind. Hence it was, that he often expreſſed a wiſh to die "ſoftly, ſuddenly, and alone." On Tueſday morning he was found dead in his bed: and as the clothes were not the leaſt diſcompoſed, nor his features diſtorted, it is probable, that this great and amiable man expired exactly as he wiſhed.

He died at Showell-Green, near Birmingham, in the houſe of William Ruſſell, the reſpected friend of Dr. Prieſtley, at the age of fifty-four years, and eight months: and was interred by that worthy man, in the diſſenters' burying-ground, at Birmingham, with every token of affectionate

affectionate reſpect; and in that pulpit, from which Robert Robinſon but a week before addreſſed a numerous congregation, Dr. Prieſtley preached his funeral ſermon.

It is the uſual practice to treaſure up in the memory the dying words of eminent perſons, as teſtimonies to their laſt ſentiments, or future expectations. But, in the preſent inſtance, the reader muſt purſue his own reflections. That he poſſeſſed ſome ſentiments in common with unitarians, appears from his laſt publication; but the truth is, he could not be tied down to creeds of any kind, and the limits of his faith cannot be aſcertained. From his whole appearance a conſiderable time before his death, the preſumption is, that he fell aſleep like a ſickly child, that ſighed for repoſe. The following imperfect tribute of reſpect to a beloved friend ſhall be ſubjoined.

Monody on the Death of Robert Robinſon.

*** The author, having been engaged in literary purſuits that had ſomewhat impaired his health, was unbending his mind at a friend's ſeat in Huntingdonſhire, by attempting an ode adapted to the ſeaſon of the year, June. This was meant to have been connected with that on ſpring. In this employment he was interrupted

ed by receiving intelligence of the death of Mr. Robinſon *.

I.

Touch'd by the glowing year,
Wake to life, Æolian ſtrings!
Wild muſic floats upon the liquid air,
Still the gay garden ſmiles, the painted meadow ſings.
In Hammond's bow'r at eaſe reclin'd,
Thus late I ſooth'd my weary mind;
Till buſy thought, and fancy gay,
Seem'd to take their holiday.
And there I wove the flow'rs of ſong.
And muſt I drop th' unfiniſh'd wreath?
Or ſtrew it wild the tombs among,
Wither'd by the blaſt of death?
Adieu, ye laurels ever gay, adieu!
A mourner ſad, I go to court the baleful yew.

II.

And, oh! thou dreary ſhade,
Receive again thy trembling gueſt †!
Yea ſolemn regions of the ſilent dead,
Find me ſome ſecret charm to ſoothe the ſuff'ring breaſt.
For ah! in vain I turn my eyes
To blooming groves and ſmiling ſkies.
Faint is the garden's gayeſt bloom;
Faint all the myrtle's rich perfume;
And faint thy beams, oh! ſacred light!
Dearer to me the loneſome gloom,
Where the pale empreſs of the night
Silvers o'er the moſs-grown tomb.
For there remembrance oft ſhall love to ſtray,
To bid the friend repoſe, to bleſs my Theron's clay.

* See my Poems; Odes, and Elegies.

† Alludes to the death of Julia Robinſon.

As

III.

As in the lonely vale
The modeſt primroſe droops and dies,
Or by the pathleſs hedge, the violet pale,
So gentle Theron droop'd, ſo breath'd his dying ſighs.
No tender conſort's aid was near;
No children caught the parting pray'r;
No friend received the laſt requeſt;
No friend the cloſing eye-lid preſs'd;
'Mid the deep ſilence of the night
Softly the genial heat retir'd,
And from his eyes recedes the light,
As the lamp of life expir'd.
Vain hope! how didſt thou fan thy treach'rous fires,
Falſe as th' inconſtant flame that ſparkles and expires.

IV.

Yet patient let me bend,
And praiſe Jehovah while I weep;
Truth may I find, and dying gain a friend:
Like Theron may I live, then gently fall aſleep.
For not to barbarous regions borne,
By bigot hands his limbs were torn,
Nor were the laſt ſad rites unpaid,
Nor ſleeps he with the vulgar dead:
The ſons of freedom o'er his bier
Hung in attentive ſilence loſt;
Dropt o'er his grave the generous tear,
And precious held his duſt;
And, the laſt offering paid at truth's fair ſhrine,
Theron ſhall wake to life, and own the truth divine.

V.

High on the topmoſt bough
Of virtue's ever ſmiling tree,
There grows a flower, that once in Eden blew,
By mortal ſight, ah! ſeldom reach'd,—fair charity!

Higher and higher may I ſoar,
Climb the fair tree, and crop the flower:
And deep within the troubled breaſt
Plant the heavenly blooming gueſt.
It's ſacred ſweets ſhould ſoothe me more,
When wrongs oppreſs, and grief invades,
Than could Arabia's ſpicy ſhore,
Or ſoft Italian ſhades.
If mortal hand e'er cropt this flower divine
To plant it in his breaſt, it was, my Theron, thine.

VI.

But ſay, hath heaven in vain
The generous ſoul with freedom fir'd?
Still o'er their tombs ſhall the pale Muſe complain,
Whom virtue warm'd, and love of honeſt fame inſpir'd?
Ah no! their honour'd names are bleſt;
In peace their ſacred aſhes reſt;
And oft the grateful Muſe ſhall roam
To drop a garland on their tomb;
And brighter ſtill their ſun ſhall riſe
When Time his tranſient courſe hath run,
O'er boundleſs fields and cloudleſs ſkies,
And keep a conſtant noon;
Where the fair tree of life for ever blows,
And the pure ſtream of bliſs, for ever, ever flows.

VII.

Sweet fields of vivid light!
Where ſtorms no more ſucceed to peace,
Nor toil to reſt, nor day retires for night;
But all is light, and love, and life, and boundleſs bliſs!
The ſons of freedom there ſhall meet,
There Virtue keep her peaceful ſeat;
Conflict no more with ſhame and pain,
Nor toiling ſeem to toil in vain;

Unſullied

Unſullied glories deck her brow;
Unceaſing ſongs her triumphs tell;
There with freſh ardor ſhall ſhe glow;
With Truth immortal dwell;
No tyrant there moleſt the happy plain,
But boundleſs Freedom hold an everlaſting reign *.

Thus lived, and thus died Robert Robinſon, a man, who from an humble ſtation in life raiſed himſelf to conſiderable notice; whoſe benign diſpoſition, and gentle manners, entitle him to the character of an amiable man; whoſe genius, whoſe learning, whoſe ſteady oppoſition to every ſpecies of tyranny, as well among proteſtant diſſenters, as eſtabliſhed hierarchies, entitle him to the character of a great man.

The reader will perceive that an attempt has been made, in the preceding biographical ſketch, to make facts, incidental occurrences, anecdotes, and publiſhed writings, relieve the tedioufneſs of narrative, and the ſolemnity of remark, to elucidate ambiguity of character, by private correſpondence, and thus to let Robinſon become, as much as might be, his own biographer. Several of the letters introduced are in themſelves curious, and, from adventitious circumſtances, rendered ſtill more intereſting. As, probably, many of my readers will be among his perſonal acquaintance, they will have the trueſt

* This ode is left nearly as written at the time: had I compoſed it now, ſeveral things in it would have been altered.

criterion by which to determine his character. To ſome of his more intimate friends, indeed, already acquainted with his writings, this method may appear tedious: but theſe memoirs likewiſe addreſs themſelves to many who were not his friends,—who never even heard of his name. A character ſo diſtinguiſhed and ſo various, as the preſent, affords materials for much ſpeculation, and invites an attention beyond the circle of private friendſhip.

The memoirs of individuals, no leſs than of ſociety at large, are the hiſtory of facts, and of rights. From ſettled cuſtoms and exiſting manners, we learn the ſtate of ſociety,—from actions and habits, the character of man.

It becomes the moraliſt to advance, as the biographer retires. He examines facts,—deduces conſequences,—ſuffers impartial judgment to follow the order of events; he ponders actions, circumſtances, ſituation, temperament; and in proportion as the right and truth of character preponderate, aſſigns a proportionate praiſe or cenſure. Biography ſhould be the unfolding of conduct, not a diſplay of epithets, —unbiaſſed by party, and unyielding even to the partiality of friendſhip. The biographer ſhould keep the line of truth. What philoſopher will not agree with La Bruyere, "That no man

ſhould

ſhould continue writing, who prefers his private gratification to the public good, and a zeal for promoting truth?"

Some perſons conſider the rank of a diſſenting miniſter of the greateſt importance to the intereſt of individuals, and to the progreſs of ſociety: they ſurround it every where with ſuperlatives: like the Roman orator approaching it with the language of incredibilis, inſuperabilis, and ſupremus; or like the Romiſh doctors, with angelicus, ſeraphicus, ſupercœleſtis, divinus:—others conſider it as a kind of humiliating character, obſcured by unfortunate ſituation, and ſcarcely capable of being rendered important: while others think it poſſeſſes a qualified nature, apt to be over-rated by the admiration of party, and undervalued in more dignified and polite circles. The philoſopher is ſuperior to ſuch partialities: he keeps aloof from diſtinctions, is not eaſily hurried away by extravagance. He collects the peculiarities of ſituation, whether fortunate or adverſe, in which he finds a perſon,—traces the features of worth, and intellect,—and from the aggregate, fixes the character of the MAN. All adventitious characters muſt be reſolved into individual worth: and, in ſuch an eſtimate, what avails, whether the hero be a churchman or a diſſenter, a preacher or a player?

Should ſuch a perſon trace in Robinſon, from very early years, generous diſpoſitions, a modeſt deportment, a propenſity to admire, to eſteem, to imitate, worth and induſtry, and to acquire knowledge, he will not ſcruple to ſay, that he poſſeſſed a diſpoſition favourable to virtue, and required only an advantageous ſituation to arrive at eminence.

If, in future life, he find him placed in a promiſing ſoil, and cultivating it by patience, by attention, by obſervation, by beneficence; gathering information, and, as it were, inviting knowledge; relieving the labour of ſtudy by active duties, and active duties by ſucceſſive ſtudies; if he behold him ſurrounded by neceſſities, yet not inſenſible of his comforts, or indifferent to the diſtreſſes of others; if he ſee him the delight of all around him, and yet by uſeful talents, rendered almoſt neceſſary to thouſands; if he ſee him prattling with children, guiding perſons in the outſet of life, adviſing ſome in the progreſs, and comforting others in the decline; diſſeminating ſuch principles of liberty among the loweſt ranks of ſociety, as lift men into a ſenſe of their dignity; if he obſerve him ſtill further extending his ſphere of uſefulneſs, varying his employments, and under all gaining eſteem and admiration; if, while he diſcharged many with talents, he ſhould behold him

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in any one outſtripping all competitors, then need he not fear to eſteem, nor the author bluſh to admire, the character of Robinſon.

" But he had failings:"—that is ſaying, he was a man. The egotiſt and the hypocrite are among the firſt to cry out for failings, and corruptions; the firſt becauſe he flatters none but himſelf; the laſt, becauſe, though the world thinks him a ſaint, he yet knows himſelf to be a knave, and thinks ill of all mankind. There appears truth in a ſaying of Rouſſeau's " that men are bad, but man is good ;" and to egotiſts and hypocrites may be addreſſed, what Robinſon once ſaid to a coxcomb, ſlandering a great man, " Take away nine parts out of ten of that character, and there remains a greater man than thou art."

" Robinſon was a vain man."—Vanity is either the vice of little minds, or the foible of great minds, weakened by exceſſive admiration. If conſciouſneſs of ſuperior powers, if to love the praiſe of good men, if the deſire of fame, conſtitute a vain man, it ſhall be admitted that Robinſon was not without vanity. If his ſituation nurſed theſe paſſions, could he help that? The obſervation of that man who ſaid, " he was too proud to be vain," will, how-

ever, in a conſiderable degree, apply to Robinſon.

O! ye admiring aſſemblies; ye who offer incenſe to your miniſters;—who acquaint them with all your private wants, and ſecret faults, and from their lips, derive all your preſent comfort and future expectations;—who unfold to them all your difficulties, and receive from them all your ſupports;—ye ſpoil the beſt characters, and complain they are not perfect!

I ſee the reaſon why popular preachers are in danger of being the vaineſt men alive. One who ought to know, obſerved, that "the pulpit is a place of eminence, in which heads not duly poiſed, are in danger of turning giddy*." —Strong heads turn giddy in a pulpit.

Notwithſtanding the concluſions that may be drawn from theſe apparent conceſſions, Robinſon was a man of humility. I leave caſuiſts to ſettle this apparent contradiction. They have reconciled greater.

"Robinſon was an ironical man." The ingenious Grecian†, who wrote the Moral Cha-

* See Fordyce's Art of Preaching.

† Theophraſtus, Eth. Charact. Περι Ειρωνειας.

racters,

racters, defines irony, " the framing of words and actions to baſe and ſiniſter ends."

It belongs to ſuch an one to addreſs his enemy as his friend, and to commend thoſe whom he intends to ruin: to thoſe who utter reproaches againſt him he feels indifference, and thoſe who inſult him, he approaches with the language of reſpect. Robinſon was the reverſe of all this. He could ſcarcely overlook an inſult, or endure neglect: he intended the good of all men, but never, deſignedly, injured a worm.

Conſider again his ſituation, though not as a preacher, dictating from a tribune, liable to no inquiſitive interruptions, or impertinent replies; but as a teacher of morals,—the village paſtor,—the caſuiſt,—the interpreter of knotty points,—the arbitrator of trifling diſputes between theological wranglers. Hapleſs ſituation for a man of ſagacity! when perhaps the diſpute is, which is the moſt glorious way for the God of mercy to crack a flea. Robinſon would ſometimes look grave, weigh the arguments on both ſides, and reply as follows: " Brother, when I conſider the weighty arguments produced by you, I incline to your ſide of the queſtion: and, brother, (addreſſing the other) when

when I conſider the weight of yours, I lean to your ſide: but who is ſufficient for theſe things? Be good men; your ſalvation depends neither on your ſentiments, nor my explanations." What ſhall I ſay? he would perhaps ſay afterwards: "Good men! neither of them was a conjuror; —and neither to be convinced by me."

"Robinſon was a flatterer:" that he underſtood the art of complimenting, and was not inſenſible to admiration, hath already been confeſſed: though perhaps the language in which this confeſſion was made, was too broad and conceding. Before we affix to his name an opprobrious appellation, let the different parts of his character be collected, and the circumſtances of his ſituation be conſidered. Let us conceive a man of ſuperior talents, placed in an inferior ſituation, engaged in frequent intercourſe, and united by religious attachment, to perſons of ſlender conceptions, as well as generous diſpoſitions; to bigots, to enthuſiaſts, to ſuperſtitious and credulous pietiſts*, as well as to liberal inquirers, and candid, ſin-

* This obſervation was certainly not directed to the diſſenting congregation at Cambridge, nor indeed to any particular *congregation*, but to *individuals* of any religious ſociety whom it may ſuit. Robinſon had an extenſive connection with perſons of different religions.

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cere believers; a man whoſe benevolence inclined him not only to endure, but to correct, the bad propenſities of mankind; to liberaliſe the youthful mind; to ſmooth the decline of life, by conſolatory promiſes, and agreeable expectations; to unfold his boſom with all the confidence of friendſhip, and all the forbearance of univerſal benevolence: before the practice of ſuch a man be confounded with that "baſe intercourſe in common life, which ſeeks only private utility*," the diſtinction ſo admirably drawn by Plutarch, between a friend and a flatterer, ſhould be weighed. Two paſſages from this incomparable treatiſe, therefore, ſhall be preſented to the reader†.

"And as on the one hand we do not applaud ſuch thoughtleſs and inconſiderate conduct, ſo on the other we cannot admire that over-nice and cautious diſpoſition, which meaſuring friendſhip only by gravity of deportment and utility, concludes that a pleaſant and chearful companion is inſtantly to be deemed a paraſite: for a friend is not a moroſe unſociable animal, nor is friendſhip venerable only in a ſevere auſterity of manners; but its very gra-

* See Theophraſti Eth. Charact. Περι Κολακειας.

† Plutarch's Treatiſe upon the Diſtinction between a Friend and Flatterer, with Remarks, by Thomas Northmore, M. A. F. S. A.

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vity and venerable deportment are pleaſing and deſirable;

> Near it the Graces and ſweet Love have fixt
> Their chearful habitations—

"Nor indeed, as Euripides obſerves, is the unfortunate man alone

> Pleaſed to meet with friendſhip's ſoothing eye:

but it increaſes no leſs the pleaſures and happineſs of thoſe who are in proſperity, than it diminiſhes the griefs and ſorrows of the afflicted in adverſity. And as the philoſopher Evenus uſed to ſay, "that fire was the beſt ſeaſoning;" ſo the Almighty, having blended the ſweets of friendſhip with our condition upon earth, hath rendered every thing, when ſhe is preſent and partakes of it, lovely and agreeable. For how is it poſſible that the flatterer could put on the maſk of pleaſantry, if he ſaw not true friendſhip cloathed in ſweetneſs? But as gilt and counterfeit veſſels imitate the brightneſs only and ſplendour of real gold; ſo the flatterer imitating the ſweetneſs and pleaſantry of the friend, always ſhews himſelf chearful and obliging, and never reſiſts or oppoſes the gratification of our wiſhes."

"But we may obſerve another diſtinction in the

the reſemblance he bears to a friend; for a true friend neither praiſes nor imitates the actions of another indiſcriminately, but ſuch only as are truly laudable. According to Sophocles,

> His nature does not lead him ſervilely
> To copy out your enmity and hate,
> But to partake your friendſhips and your love;

and indeed to accompany you only in the paths of rectitude and virtue, not in the ways of vice and error; unleſs, like ſome contagious diſeaſes of the eyes, the infection ſhould ſpread and he ſhould inſenſibly contract ſome ill habit by reaſon of his familiarity and intercourſe. As, they ſay, the companions of Plato learnt to imitate his gibbous ſhoulders; of Ariſtotle, his ſtammering; and of Alexander, the inclination of his neck and roughneſs of his voice: for ſome people are apt unwittingly to imbibe many bad habits from the lives and manners of their friends. But the flatterer evidently reſembles the chamæleon, which changes itſelf to every colour but white; for being unable to emulate thoſe virtues which are alone worthy his emulation, he takes care to let no vice or imperfection eſcape him. And as bad painters, who have not ſkill enough to expreſs the finer touches of beauty, confine their likeneſſes to wrinkles, ſpots and ſcars; ſo the flatterer imitates your intemperance, ſuperſtition, irafcibility,

irafcibility, harfhnefs to fervants, and miftruft of your familiars and relations; for he is by his own nature prone to ill, and fancies, that by copying your vices he is far removed from the appearance of cenfuring them. For they furely have more the femblance of an enemy, who are ever urging the reformation of their friends, and feem to be diffatisfied with, and full of indignation at, their faults; fuch conduct as this loft Dion the favour of Dionyfius, Samius that of Philip, and Cleomenes that of Ptolemy, and ended in their ruin; but flatterers, being defirous of appearing as well agreeable companions, as faithful friends, pretend, on account of the violence of their affection, to be difguſted not even at your vices, but in every refpect to labour under the fame natural infirmities and paffions as yourfelf."

It muft, however, be acknowledged, that one of Robinfon's pliant genius, and profeffional character, may eafily be betrayed into extravagant language and indefenfible declarations.

" Robinfon was a violent partifan, furious with the fpirit of profelytifm."—This objection, it feems, has been frequently urged to thofe worthy women, his generous patroneffes during his life-time*, and who, as they underftood his worth, revere his memory.

* See p. 124 of thefe Memoirs.

Robinfon

Robinſon was rather the herald of liberty, than a preaching dogmatiſt, or a ſpouter for a party: he loved to ſee crowded auditories, it is true: but he could addreſs half a dozen perſons with ingenuity, affection, and pathos. A zealous oppoſer of tyranny, however, civil, as well as religious, may be indulged in a little earneſtneſs; and where he does not force his ſentiments, he may be allowed to recommend them. Zeal for the minutiæ of any ſectarian principles Robinſon had for many years outgrown. Such only as had the intellectual vigour and reſolution to form their own tenets, were the converts, by whom he wiſhed to be followed and admired. Robinſon was ambitious, it muſt be granted, to make proſelytes of this deſcription; but not to form Trinitarians, Unitarians, Calviniſts, or Baptiſts.

In the ſame liberty of ſentiment, that he allowed others, he ſeems to have indulged himſelf. Many perſons have objected to him, that he diſguiſed his real ſentiments: and hence the difficulty of anſwering the queſtion, Where did he ſettle at laſt?

To ſpeak freely, it ſeems a part leſs liable to ambiguity, and leſs ſubject to contradiction, to conſider him, at the cloſe of life, as a man of literature, than as a divine: as to

his preciſe character in the laſt reſpect, it is ſafer to ſay what he was not, than what he was. He was not a bigot—he was not an enthuſiaſt —he was not a ſuperſtitious man—he was not a Calviniſt—he was not a trinitarian—and ſome expreſs doubts, with reſpect to his confeſſion to Dr. Prieſtley, "that he was indebted to him for the little he knew of rational defenſible Chriſtianity:" we ought, at leaſt, to be on our guard againſt a concluſion too general and too determinate. That he had read many of that great man's writings, and held ſeveral ſentiments in common with him, is undoubtedly true; but how far he believed his ſyſtem, it would be very difficult to determine. Robinſon admired the talents and learning of Dr. Prieſtley; but he was too much in the habit of paying reſpectful compliments. A declaration ſimilar to that made to Dr. Prieſtley, he alſo made to the learned Robert Tyrwhitt, of Jeſus'-college, as well as to others. This inſinuation is not intended to reſcue Robinſon from the regions of hereſy, but to leave him more particularly diſtinguiſhed by his prominent feature of character,—love of religious liberty.

In regard to the importance, in which he conſidered baptiſm—even there, ſome may entertain a degree of heſitation. When he wrote his two admirable hiſtories, he was unqueſtionably

queſtionably a ſincere baptiſt: but when it is recollected that the whole was written nearly a year before his deceaſe, a perſon who doubts, whether he ſuppoſed baptiſm ſo important, as he did originally, ſhould not be charged with illiberality. As to the worth of baptiſm, it ſtands or falls by its own weight. What it appeared in Robinſon's eſtimation, is quite another conſideration. In one of his letters to a friend*, there occurs ſome ſuch ſingular exclamation, as the following:—" I became a baptiſt on principle, and now I am aſhamed of my party!" It muſt, indeed, be confeſſed, that this ſpeech might in ſome meaſure be forced from him by feelings of ſtrong and ill-timed indignation againſt individuals: but Robinſon, for a conſiderable time before his death, ſhewed not only an indifference, but a degree of manifeſt reluctance towards the practice of this ceremony. He evidently ſeemed to conſider it as a burden, rather than a delight; and though the hiſtory of this ceremony has been narrated by him with more ingenuity and learning, than by any other hiſtorian, yet the chapter on its perpetuity, written probably ſeveral years before his death, is feeble and unſatisfactory, if not declamatory, and evaſive. Let the baptiſts continue in the practice of what they think a divine inſtitute. They are left in the un-

* Mary Hays.

diſturbed poſſeſſion of all the arguments with which reaſon, ſcripture, or antiquity can furniſh them. But in making this cloſing remark, more reſpect is due to the general intereſt of the riſing generation, than to that of any particular party. There is one caution with which I would impreſs the youthful mind, " not to be laviſh of their confidence in great names;" even learned authorities, quoted with all the preciſion of chapter and verſe, and urged with the zeal, perhaps with the impetuoſity and violence of belief, ſhould not ſettle their judgments, nor regulate their concluſions. They muſt not be ſhocked to be told, that numerous inſtances occur of men who have written in the ſupport of ſyſtems, which they at length outgrew, and that many ingenious and learned men have found it eaſier to defend their old tenets, than to believe them. Hence it has happened, that, in the diſſenting, as well as eſtabliſhed churches, the very men, who are now appealed to, as the ſtandards of what is called orthodoxy, died in the belief of what is ſuppoſed hereſy; and ſome of our moſt learned critics have not been the firmeſt believers. —Reader, ſpeaking of Robert Robinſon, ſay not of him, " he believed this tenet, or diſbelieved the other;" for, perhaps, there may exiſt perſons who may think themſelves qualified to contradict thee.—Say rather of him, " he was an amiable, a benevolent, a generous,

a learned man; a true philanthropiſt, an invariable friend to liberty." That aſſertion no man living will be able to confute.

It may be proper to add, that the ampleſt teſtimonies to the abilities, learning, and virtues of Robert Robinſon, may be found in the writings of perſons of various denominations: but the reader is more particularly referred to the three funeral ſermons publiſhed on occaſion of his death *, and the biographical ſketch of him in the Scotch Encyclopædia †, each written by men of very reſpectable talents, and of different religious perſuaſions.

A paſſage from each of theſe writers ſhall be ſubmitted to the reader. Dr. Prieſtley, amidſt other encomiums, that he paſſes on him, obſerves as follows:—

" He was a wonderful example of a man riſing to conſiderable eminence by his own exertions. His education was no other than that of a grammar-ſchool, and his firſt ſerious turn was given to him by the preaching of Mr. Whitfield. But he gradually devoted himſelf wholly to the work of the miniſtry

* By Dr. Prieſtley, Dr. Rees, and Dr. Toulmin.

† Scotch Encylopædia, volume xvi. Article, Robinſon.

among the baptiſts; and in the diſcharge of the duties of it, eſpecially in his labours among the lower ranks of people, he greatly diſtinguiſhed himſelf. What you ſaw and heard of him here would give you no idea of what he had been. For the diſorder to which he had been more than a year ſubject, and which, it is ſaid, was brought on by intenſe, and I may ſay intemperate, application to ſtudy, had weakened his mind, as well as his body, and, as is always the caſe, much more than he was himſelf aware of; though he ſtill retained a fluency of ſpeech, and a command of language, that few can boaſt. When he was in his prime, he uſed, without any art, or oſtentation of oratory, perfectly to command the attention of his audience; and, always ſpeaking extempore, he could vary his ſtyle and addreſs according to his hearers, in a manner that was truly wonderful. His writings diſcover equal powers of imagination, and of judgment. His ſermons, preached in the villages near Cambridge, are remarkable for their plainneſs and propriety. But at the time that they were compoſed, he had not acquired all the ſentiments that he had before he died.

"What moſt of all diſtinguiſhed Mr. Robinſon was his earneſt love of truth, and his laborious ſearch after it. Educated in Calviniſtic prin-

principles, he was the greateſt part of his life very zealous in the propagation of them. I myſelf remember hearing him many years ago explaining the Calviniſtic doctrine of juſtification to a crouded and very attentive audience in London. Mr. Lindſey's reſignation of his living in the church of England, and his writings in defence of unitarianiſm, exciting a good deal of attention, Mr. Robinſon publiſhed a book entitled "A Plea for the Divinity of Chriſt," one of the moſt plauſible of the treatiſes on that ſide of the queſtion, and the only one that Mr. Lindſey thought proper to reply to. For this work Mr. Robinſon was very much careſſed by the friends of the eſtabliſhed church; and on this account, I believe, it was, that he had the offer of conſiderable preferment in the church of England, which, however, with great magnanimity, he rejected."

Dr. Rees, the learned editor of Chambers's Encyclopædia, ſpeaks of Robinſon as follows:—

"To a perſon of Mr. Robinſon's diſpoſition, and ardent deſire of knowledge, his ſituation in the vicinity of this celebrated Univerſity,—an Univerſity equally celebrated for its learning and moderation;—his acquaintance with many of its reſpectable Members, who honour-

ed his worth, however they differed from him in opinion;—and his acceſs to its valuable libraries, were advantages ofgreat importance; and which he knew how duly to eſtimate and to improve. I have often heard him expreſs great ſatisfaction with the lot which Providence had aſſigned him. His talent for ſprite-ly converſation, and his general knowledge, qualified him for being an agreeable companion to thoſe literary friends, with whom he aſſociated. And there are many of them, who, I am perſuaded, ſincerely lament the loſs of him. If I might be allowed to expreſs a wiſh on this occaſion, it would be, that the congregation to which he miniſtered, may be able to ſupply the vacancy which his death has occaſioned, by the choice of a gentleman of abilities and learning*; whoſe character in this reſpect muſt redound in no ſmall degree to the credit of the diſſenting cauſe; and preclude or obviate objections which the eſtabliſhed clergy have ſometimes, though, I truſt, never with uncandid intentions, and often without ſufficient reaſon, urged againſt the miniſters of our churches. Indeed, a perſon of any other deſcription cannot be a fit ſucceſſor to your honoured paſtor, or expect accept-

* The congregation have choſen a perſon of this deſcription, Robert Hall, M. A. late a tutor at the Briſtol Academy, a perſon of very reſpectable talents.

ance

ance among the people to whom he miniſtered.

"To what a high degree your miniſter approved himſelf the enlightened, ſteady, and zealous friend of civil and religious liberty, it is needleſs for me to ſay. His praiſe is in all the churches. His preaching and his writings have been uniformly directed, according to his beſt judgment, to ſerve the great intereſts of uncorrupt Chriſtianity, unlimited toleration, and univerſal liberty. His name has been often mentioned in the ſenate of the nation, ſometimes with reſpect, but generally with a view of criminating and reproaching him. But thoſe who have reproached him, have diſhonoured themſelves:—for the principles which he avowed, and which he ſtudiouſly endeavoured to diſſeminate, are the fundamental principles of the Britiſh conſtitution:—and whatever oppoſition they may now meet with, they muſt ultimately prevail. He poſſeſſed ample powers of ſelf-defence, and if his valuable life had been prolonged, his accuſers would have been expoſed; and the cauſe of civil and religious liberty would have found in him an able and zealous advocate."

Dr. Toulmin, a reſpectable baptiſt miniſter at Taunton, Somerſetſhire, author of the Life of

Socinus, as well as various other publications, and editor of the new edition of Neale's Hiſtory of the Puritans, obſerves of him as follows:—

" He had not been long ſettled at Cambridge, before his ſingular talents and excellent qualifications began to be much noticed; and, at the deſire of the town and gown, he ſet up a Lord's-day-evening lecture, which was crowded. It was ſuppoſed that not leſs than one hundred and fifty or two hundred gownſmen generally attended*. His preaching was altogether without notes; a method in which he was peculiarly happy; not by truſting to his memory entirely, nor by working himſelf up to a degree of warmth and paſſion, to which the preachers among whom he firſt appeared, commonly owe their ready utterance; but by thoroughly ſtudying and making himſelf perfectly maſter of his ſubject, and a certain faculty of expreſſion which is never at a loſs for ſuitable and proper words. In ſhort, his manner was admirably adapted to enlighten the underſtanding, and to affect and reform the heart. He had ſuch a plainneſs of ſpeech, ſuch an eaſy and apparent method in

* Robinſon was much attended by gownſmen, but rarely in ſuch a manner as this. The worthy doctor was miſinformed.

dividing

dividing a diſcourſe, and ſuch a familiar way of reaſoning, as diſcovered an heart filled with the tendereſt concern for the meaneſt of his hearers; and yet there was a decency, propriety, and juſtneſs, that the moſt judicious could not but approve. Several gentlemen of the univerſity, eminent for character and abilities, were his conſtant hearers.

" His good ſenſe and generous ſpirit would not ſuffer him to go into the trammels of any party. Religious liberty, if I may be allowed the expreſſion, was his idol. From this principle, he would not accept the paſtoral office, till the congregation had conſented to open and enlarge their communion, which till then had been formed upon the ſtrict and rigid principle of an agreement in the queſtions concerning baptiſm. He was open to conviction, and the warm friend of free inquiry. It is a ſtriking proof of this, that, as it is generally underſtood, he lately changed his ſentiments concerning the perſon of Chriſt, and became a believer of the divine unity, after having publiſhed a popular piece to prove that Jeſus Chriſt is truly and properly God, which procured him the offer of conſiderable preferment in the church."

A writer in the " Scotch Encyclopædia" ſpeaks as follows :—

" It may be reckoned a circumſtance worthy of mention, that the ſphere of Mr. Robinſon's miniſtry was the ſame in which his great grandfather, Mr. Shelly, of Jeſus'-College, and vicar of All-Saints, had, with others, diffuſed the principles of the Puritans, about the beginning of the laſt century. The reputation of the diſſenters in the univerſity and neighbourhood had for almoſt a century been ſinking into contempt, when Mr. Robinſon ſettled with the baptiſt church at Stone-Yard. His abilities and aſſiduity, however, raiſed their reputation. The place in which his people aſſembled, which was at firſt a barn, afterwards a ſtable and granary, and then a meeting-houſe, but ſtill a damp, dark, and ruinous place, ſoon became too ſmall for the audience; and ſeveral of the new auditors being men of fortune, they purchaſed the ſite, and erected at their own expenſe a new houſe in the year 1764.

" The abilities of Mr. Robinſon were very conſiderable, as appears from his numerous works; and he poſſeſſed the quality of expreſſing his thoughts in an eaſy and a forcible manner. But he appears to have been of an unſteady temper, and, in our opinion, acquires but little credit from the frequency with which he changed his religious creed (for we have reaſon to believe he died a Socinian)."

We

We cloſe this review of his character, with exhibiting his ſurvey of the French Revolution.

It cannot but afford our readers pleaſure, to be acquainted with Robinſon's ſentiments on theſe important tranſactions, a ſtate of things, which, in future hiſtories, will unqueſtionably be referred to as the grandeſt epoch in the hiſtory of mankind; Αστηρ αριζηλος, αλαθινον ανδρι φεγγος*, "An unrivalled ſtar, holding out the light of Truth to man."—As this appears a new point of ſight, in which Robinſon is ſeen in a very unambiguous and decided character, it ſeems not unnatural to cloſe his memoirs with a quotation from the Advertiſement to the Paris Revolution Magazine, the firſt number of which was tranſlated from the original French, by Robinſon, a ſhort time before his death†, previouſly to the horrible events that afterwards occurred.

"The revolution itſelf is a truly wonderful work, and intereſting in every view. As an event, it will furniſh future hiſtorians with a ſubject worthy the dignity of hiſtory. Such times expoſe the latent powers of man, which riſe and act, rouſed by the great objects before them. Reaſon exerts her moſt and beſt. The paſſions riſe to high-water mark. Every thing

* Pindar. † In 1790.

ſwells

ſwells to a ſize that renders glaſſes uſeleſs ; and even the moſt minute events are ſeen to have their neceſſity and importance.

"To a liberal mind expanding in benevolence, (and what but a miſerable captive in chains, is a mind deſtitute of liberality?) ſuch events teach the pureſt morality, by expoſing the horrors of vice in a thouſand ſeducing forms, and by diſplaying virtue in her beauty, benefits and ſtrength, eſpecially that virtue which is never cheriſhed, without producing a harveſt of happineſs to whole nations at a time."

APPENDIX.

I.

Robinſon's Confeſſion of Faith, on being appointed Miniſter of a Congregation, at Cambridge.

1. OF God.—I believe, that there is one only living and true God, who is over all, bleſſed for evermore: by whom, and through whom, and for whom, are all things. 2. Of the ſcriptures.—That the ſcriptures of the Old and New Teſtament are the word of God; were given by inſpiration, and contain all things neceſſary to be believed and practiſed. 3. Of the trinity.—That in the unity of the Godhead, there are three perſons, or ſubſtances—the father, the ſon, and the holy ghoſt, the ſame in ſubſtance, equal in majeſty and glory. 4. Of predeſtination.—That God foreſaw, and foreappointed whatſoever comes to paſs; that of his grace he elected a certain number of perſons to ſalvation, predeſtinating them to the adoption of children by Chriſt, to the praiſe of the glory of his grace. That the ſalvation of the elect is all of the Lord. The reprobation of the wicked

ed of themſelves. 5. Of the fall.—That God created the firſt man Adam, upright, and gave him a law which he was capable of obeying; that, left to an entire freedom, he ſinned againſt God, and as he was a public head, involved himſelf and all his poſterity in ſin and miſery. 6. Of Jeſus Chriſt.—That in the fullneſs of time, God ſent forth his ſon, made of a woman, made under the law, veſted with the threefold office, of prophet, prieſt, and king; as a prophet, he taught a pure doctrine, and ſhewed a perfect example;—as a prieſt, he expiated ſin, and honoured the law, and having put away ſin, became our advocate with the father in heaven;—as a king, he reigns by his precepts over the hearts, minds, and lives of his followers. He roſe from the dead, aſcended into heaven, and remains there till his ſecond coming. 7. Of juſtification.—I believe that we are juſtified freely by grace, not by works of righteouſneſs, which we have done, but according to the mercy of God, through the redemption, that is in Jeſus Chriſt. 8. Of effectual calling.—That being, by nature, children of wrath, without merit, and without ſtrength, the holy ſpirit, in his own time and way, impreſſes religious truths on the minds of the elect. That he gives them an evidence to the underſtanding, an authority over the will, and by them ſanctifies the heart, reforms the life,

life, and renovates the whole man. 9. Of perſeverance.—That ſuch as are called by grace, perſevere to eternal glory; they may fall foully, but not finally. 10. That good works proceed from a good principle—are directed by a right rule—and aim at a good end. That they are the neceſſary parts of a ſaving faith, eſſential to ſalvation, though not to juſtification. 11. That a new teſtament church is a voluntary ſociety of Chriſtians, agreeing in the eſſentials of faith, and in the mode of divine worſhip, aſſembling in one place, uniting in giving themſelves up to the Lord, and to one another, by the will of God: that every ſuch ſociety has an independent right of chuſing its own officers, and exerciſing ſuch diſcipline, as the holy ſcriptures direct. 12. Of baptiſm and the Lord's ſupper.—That baptiſm is a New Teſtament ordinance of perpetual uſe, that it is only rightly adminiſtered by dipping, and a profeſſion of faith and obedience; that the Lord's ſupper is an ordinance perpetually to be adminiſtered till the Lord comes; that as none ought to be forced into the church by baptiſm, without his conſent, ſo none are to be kept from the Lord's ſupper, who conſcientiouſly, though erroneouſly, approve of their own baptiſm in infancy. 13. Of the reſurrection and final judgment.—I believe that there is an eternal ſtate of happineſs and miſery; that

God

God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world by Jeſus Chriſt; that there will be a reſurrection of both the juſt and unjuſt; when, ſouls and bodies re-united, all will receive the due reward of their deeds; the wicked will go away into everlaſting puniſhment; but the righteous into life eternal.

II.

The Circular Letter of the Eaſtern Aſſociation, held at Harlow, Eſſex, June 16th, 17th, and 18th, 1778.

To the Proteſtant Diſſenting Churches, uſually denominated BAPTISTS, aſſembling for Divine Worſhip,

At Cambridge,
Cheneys, Bucks,
Cheſham, Bucks,
Colnbrook, Bucks,
Harlow, Eſſex,
Hertford,
Hempſtead, Herts,
Hitchin, Herts,
New-Mill, Herts,
Over, Camb.
Woodrow, Bucks,

This CIRCULAR LETTER is with great Reſpect addreſſed,

By Robert Robinſon,
Hugh Giles,
James Sleap,
William Walker,
Iſaac Gould,
Robert Baſkerville,
Morgan Jones,
John Geard,
Henry Blaine,
Richard Emery,
Richard Morris,
John Whitby,
John Raye,
James Sharp,
Ralph Cocket,
Francis Chapman,
Francis Bolton,
Thomas Caporn,

Miniſters, and Meſſengers,
Repreſenting the ſaid Churches in
Aſſociation.

" *Dear and honoured Brethren,*

" Through the great goodneſs of God, we, the miniſters, and meſſengers of the aſſociated churches, met in health, and peace, and quietly enjoyed what was graciouſly promiſed long ago, Zech. iii. 10.—In attending to the ſeveral letters, we find abundant cauſe for thankfulneſs, when we conſider the peaceable and proſperous ſtate of the churches in our connexion.—Our numbers increaſe—Our churches are comfortably provided with paſtors—and peace ſubſiſts in the general body, and in each particular church.—But as Zion, in her militant ſtate, has ever a mixture of groans, and complaints with her ſongs of joy, ſo we find it with ourſelves.—We have cauſe to lament the ſmall influence of the goſpel of Chriſt on ourſelves and others.—We view with ſorrow the diſtracted ſtate of our country.—We grieve for the almoſt general inattention of our countrymen unto the hand of God in our national troubles.—We mourn for the want of a ſpirit of prayer, by which we would take hold on a departing God, and prevail with him ſtill to ſtretch the wings of his providential protection over our country, and to ſhed the beams of his gracious influence on his churches.—It is matter of ſorrow to us to ſee among the profeſſors

feſſors of truth, ſo many looſe livers, formal worſhippers, neglecters of ordinances, fierce diſputers, orthodox worldlings, and lukewarm chriſtians.—Theſe things being conſidered, the threatening appearance they wear apprehended, the conſequences dreaded, and the remedy deſired, we judged it expedient to appoint a day for humiliation, faſting, and prayer, to be obſerved in all the congregations in our aſſociation, and requeſt your ſerious attention to that ſolemn buſineſs.

" In our laſt year's addreſs, brethren, we earneſtly recommended to you the ancient and uſeful cuſtom of ASSOCIATING, and ſet before you for example the practice of our fathers in the faith.—This primitive inſtitution, we believe, may under a divine bleſſing be attended with ſingular advantages, when conducted in love, and regulated by chriſtian prudence.

" By ſuch a yearly correſpondence, we lay each church under a kind of neceſſity to keep up the regular diſcipline of God's houſe. They are allured to look into their own ſtate, in order to ſend a juſt account unto the aſſociated body, and are naturally led to an examination of their preſent circumſtances.—This may prove a means to prevent thoſe awful conſequences, which uſually follow an inattention to our pre-

ſent ſtate, both in individuals, and collected ſocieties. Laodicea is ſaid "*not to know*" perhaps for want of examination. Grey-hairs are often unſeen, for want of attention to our own condition.—Had ſome men been in connexion with a ſociety of merchants, to whom they judged it proper to ſend a yearly account of profit and loſs, they had perhaps prevented that, which has been ruinous to themſelves, and greatly detrimental to others.—Churches, in connection with an aſſociated body, ſhould doubtleſs make their minute remarks on their own ſtate, at the return of the ſeaſon; and the following things ſhould be the objects of their attention.—The increaſe or diminution of their auditory—The regular or irregular attendance of the members on the ordinances in the church, whether public or private—The temper and frame (ſo far as may be diſcerned) of all under the preaching of God's word—and the apparent influence of the word, when it is preached, whether it be made the means of awakening the careleſs, reſtraining the vicious, or perſuading ſouls to follow Chriſt, if the dejected be comforted, if ſaints be urged to a diligent purſuit after great meaſures of grace and holineſs, and be built up in their moſt holy faith.—Thus, by a narrow inſpection into the general ſtate of the church, and a regard to the caſe of each member, the

paſtor of each church might be led to form a more exact judgment of the good or bad ſtate of his flock, and to rejoice, or mourn, according to its flouriſhing or declining condition.—His repreſentation of this to the general body will give all an opportunity of aſſiſting him by caution, by direction, by comfort, or advice, as beſt ſuited to his circumſtances.

" If this be ſtrictly and conſcientiouſly attended to by the officers of our ſeveral churches, the right END of aſſociating may be expected. While we all unanimouſly ſeek to promote the glory of our God, and the ſpiritual profit and proſperity of his purchaſed people, we purſue the grand *end*, for which the Lord made us men, and made us Chriſtians. In all religious inſtitutions, brethren, there is a GRAND END propoſed by God, and this end ſhould ever be purſued by us. The grand end of *all* to be attended to in all ordinances is the glorifying of God, and our own ſalvation; and, though theſe ſeem to be two, yet they really are but one end, God having joined them ſo cloſely together, that it is impoſſible for any to put them aſunder. When either of us look upon himſelf as a member of a ſmaller or larger body of religious men, we are ever to conſider the end deſigned by God in making us ſuch, and be duly careful to hold this end ever in view. Am

I a ſhepherd over a part of his flock? What is the end of my office? Am I a member of a chriſtian church? What was the deſign of God, in putting me among his people? Is it not to fit me for his ſervice on earth, and the enjoyment of himſelf in heaven, that he may be glorified in my ſalvation? If I be a true member of his true church, this is the end deſigned by God, and ſhould always be purſued by me. A careleſs unconverted profeſſor, in every part of his religious character, either purſues no end, or a bad one, and thus never conſidering the end of his church memberſhip, not purſuing it, miſſes the grand end deſigned by God towards his own people, both in this world, and the next; for he is neither made holy here, nor happy hereafter. May each of you, brethren, under divine influence, be enabled ever to keep the right end in view in all your ſolemn dealings with God and his church! You may be ſure, that the end of every goſpel inſtitution is anſwered to each of you, when each is made a wiſe, comfortable, and fruitful chriſtian: wiſe by a ſpiritual diſcovery of the glory and goodneſs of divine truth; comfortable in a rich and ſound experience of its life-giving power on your own ſoul; and fruitful by a practical improvement of its bleſſings in your life and converſation.

" That there is great glory and much good-

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neſs to be ſeen in the goſpel of Chriſt, is not to be doubted; for it is the wiſdom of God in a myſtery, yet it is not every man's happineſs to have a ſpiritual diſcovery thereof, witneſs Matt. xi. 25, and yet a ſpiritual diſcovery of the glory and goodneſs of goſpel truth is indiſpenſably neceſſary to make a man a *real* chriſtian. It is not underſtanding the ſyſtem, or ſcheme of evangelical doctrines, as laid down in creeds, and confeſſions, that works any ſanctifying effects in the ſoul, or brings a man one ſtep nearer Heaven: but it is a ſpiritual diſcovery of the glory and goodneſs of goſpel doctrines, which makes a man wiſe unto ſalvation. Many there are, brethren, who, for want of attending to this diſtinction, awfully deceive themſelves, and, at the ſame time they are orthodox profeſſors, and look upon themſelves as ſound believers, they remain blind to the glory, and ignorant of the goodneſs, of thoſe truths, which they profeſs to believe, and thus become doctors in divinity, while they remain dunces in real chriſtianity.

" This happens not becauſe they don't in ſome ſenſes know truth, but becauſe they never had any ſpiritual diſcovery of its glory and goodneſs. It is a truth owned and acknowledged by all the profeſſors of chriſtianity, " *That Jeſus Chriſt came into the world to ſave*

ſinners :" but where the glory and goodneſs of this truth is ſeen by an enlightened underſtanding, it produces wonderful effects in the ſoul —See Phil. iii. 8.

" There is a ſweet harmony and perfect agreement ſeen between the doctrines of truth, when viewed by a ſpiritual mind ; one ſerves to ſet off the luſtre of the other ; and hence the doctrine of human depravity ſerves to magnify the riches of divine grace, and when viewed in conjunction with other truths, by thoſe who feel the awful truth in their own breaſts, it begets true humility, and produces an humble walk towards God and man—ſhews the abſolute need of Chriſt's ſacrifice—and begets profound admiration at God's love. This ſpiritual diſcovery of the glory and goodneſs of divine truth, brethren, (though overlooked by many) is the only thing that can make us truly wiſe. Many perſons ſee the image of truth in a conſiſtent ſet of ſentiments, and content themſelves with viewing the well-drawn picture, while the beauty of ſubſtantial truth is hid from their eyes. Take heed, brethren, of this deception. You would pity the deluded wretch, who proſtrates himſelf before a painted puppet, and vainly imagines he has paid his acceptable ſervice to the mother of God ; not leſs to be pitied is that man, who ſees the conſiſtency of doctrinal

doctrinal ſentiments, and is blind to the glory of truth itſelf.

" We pray for you all, brethren, that what was ſaid of old 2 Cor iv. 6, may be fulfilled in each of you to the joy of your ſouls: for where the Holy Ghoſt enlightens the underſtanding, and enables it to diſcover ſpiritual things in their *true* nature, God's glory, and a ſinner's beſt intereſt, are ſeen inſeparably united, and eternally ſecured.

" God appears infinitely glorious, and the ſinner unſpeakably happy, and divine truth diſcovered to the underſtanding makes plain this inſcrutable myſtery. Thus it is we are made truly wiſe, and when the powerful influence of truth is felt on the ſoul, we are made truly happy, and unſpeakably comfortable.—There is nothing, brethren, in the whole compaſs of knowledge, like goſpel truth revealed to the ſoul to make men really happy. It is ſaid to be life eternal, John xvii. 3. Truth acknowledged and confeſſed only will afford no real pleaſure, but truth diſcovered in its glory, and felt in its comforting influence, with a ſolid perſuaſion of our own perſonal intereſt therein, will carry us through life and death compoſed and happy, joyful and triumphant. The notion of Chriſt dying for ſinners may claim a cold aſſent,

aſſent, and beget a deluſive hope in the heart of a dying formaliſt: but the felt perſuaſion of Chriſt dying for ME, removing the curſe from ME, and fully delivering ME from the wrath to come, and thus opening a free paſſage for me to the throne of God, this, I ſay, delivers me from my guilty fears—inſpires my ſoul with devout gratitude—begets in me exalted hopes of glory—makes me ſmile in death, and rejoice in the proſpect of an opening eternity. Truth, brethren, is ſo far our own, as its influence is felt on our ſouls; and when the truth is thus brought home in its power on the ſoul, it never fails to produce its genuine effects in the converſation and life; for while it attracts me with its beauty, and comforts me with its ſweetneſs, it regulates my words and actions by both.

" Every good work muſt proceed from a good principle, and there can be no good principle in a ſinner's heart until it is formed there by the power of truth.—The principles of religion, which we commonly call the doctrines of the goſpel, or are termed by others Calviniſtic ſentiments, are the only powerful incentives to real holineſs; but they never produce it in any except thoſe, who diſcover their glory and feel their power. Their being held as ſentiments by many, without being felt as powerful

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motives and ſtrong inducements to real godlineſs, have greatly expoſed them to the contempt of the ignorant, and the fierce rage of oppoſers; but every one of you, brethren, who know the peace and comfort ariſing from a powerful perſuaſion of God's love, and a ſtedfaſt belief of his having forgiven you all ſin, freely and fully, through the merit of his bleſſed Son; you, I ſay know that theſe mercies of God powerfully perſuade you to give up your bodies as a living ſacrifice holy and acceptable to the Lord. Had God propoſed a method of ſaving ſinners, which did not make as ſuitable proviſion for their holineſs, as it did for their happineſs, it had been greatly to the detriment of his ſacred character: but this can never be ſaid with truth reſpecting the plan of wiſdom revealed in the oracles of God, and profeſſed by us.

" It will certainly be found, where the glory of goſpel truths is diſcovered, and their influence felt on the ſoul, that they will produce a converſation, which will adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour. Can I ſee the wiſdom, the juſtice, the mercy and the love of God, in puniſhing his beloved Son for my guilty ſoul, and enjoy the divine conſolation, which this truth affords, and not be led to love and obey God in return for his goodneſs? It cannot be. You

are therefore, brethren, ever to diſtinguiſh between evangelical doctrines profeſſed, and truth experienced in its power. Truth profeſſed in doctrines conſtitutes a profeſſor: but truth experienced in its power makes a Chriſtian.

" We moſt earneſtly recommend it to you all to labour for a ſpiritual diſcovery of the glory and goodneſs of your own principles—a felt ſenſe of their power on your own ſouls—and a practical improvement of them in the whole of your converſation. As many of you as have been ſavingly enlightened are ſons of God. See the honour of your relation, and live under a felt ſenſe of this, and it is impoſſible you can indulge ſin.

" Each of you ſtands in a threefold capacity, and has three diſtinct characters to attend to—you may be conſidered as men in the world—as members of the church—and as relations in the family.—In your *Chriſtian* character theſe three are to meet. An honeſt man in the world—an honourable member of Chriſt's church—and a good relation in the family. The ſpiritual knowledge and comfortable enjoyment of your own principles is abſolutely neceſſary to form you ſuch Chriſtians, as are uſeful to the world, and an honour to the church, and bleſſings to the families, in which God

God has placed you. The grand end of all God's inſtitution is then anſwered when you are thus made wiſe, comfortable, and fruitful Chriſtians. The end for which we miniſters labour, in the ſtudy, in our prayers, public and private, in our exhortations in your houſes, and in our public miniſtrations, is then anſwered when you are brought to ſee the glory of the goſpel, to feel its *transforming* influence, and when it is practically drawn out in your lives to the glory of God, the profit of men, and the real advantages of yourſelves. For this, brethren, we aſſociate—for this we preach—for this we hope—and for this we pray. When our labours are thus crowned with ſucceſs, we ſhall ſee religion reſpected where it is not embraced, and your lives will condemn thoſe, whom our preaching cannot reform: but if any of you be ſtill blind, ſordid, worldly, and impure, our labour is loſt, our time and ſtrength is ſpent for nought, we are diſappointed, and you are eternally undone.—Brethren, remember you are made a ſpectacle unto God, angels, and men—Take care you don't prejudice the minds of the hardened world againſt the truth, while you profeſs to believe the beſt of principles, and live no better than they, who hold the worſt.—The truths you profeſs are worthy of the allwiſe God to reveal, and of every wiſe man to embrace and believe.

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Let your conduct therefore powerfully convince every beholder, that your religion consists not in assenting to a set of dry speculative notions; but that you are influenced in heart and life by the soul-transforming truth of God.—If I profess, that God loved me before the world began—that his dear son redeemed me from hell by his blood—that I am brought out of a state of death and misery—that I am made a fellow citizen of the saints—that I am led by the spirit of God—and am training up through a variety of dispensations for an eternity of enjoyment with God,—can any thing be more reasonable, than that whether I eat or drink, or whatsoever I do, I should do all to the glory of God?

" We are jealous, brethren, lest any of you should make the fatal mistake of thinking, that believing the truth of the doctrines of grace is believing on Christ. There is a material difference between a man's believing the doctrine of remission and his believing on Christ for the forgiveness of his own sins. The former of these may remain a cold uninfluencing sentiment: the latter will prove a heart-purifying grace.

" Give us leave then to remind you, brethren, that it is only the province of the divine spirit, to discover the beauty of divine truth to the

the minds of men and powerfully to perſuade the ſoul to embrace it from its diſcovered goodneſs. Our parents may teach us a conſiſtent train of juſt ſentiments, and help us to ſupport the ſame by plain ſcripture proofs: but unleſs the ſpirit of God give the underſtanding a power of perception, and hold forth goſpel truth in its native beauty before the ſoul, we ſhall remain ignorant of the true nature of every ſpiritual object. 1. Cor. ii. 14.—2. Cor. iv. 6. Until the goodneſs of them is apprehended by the mind, they will have no influence on the heart, nor can they produce any good effects in the life.

" This being the caſe, our Lord, in his infinite compaſſion to his church, left us that comfortable promiſe, John, xvi. 13. from whence it appears that the office of the Holy Ghoſt is a LEADING INTO ALL TRUTH, and a principal part of truth is its goodneſs and the ſuitableneſs of it to the nature and known attributes of God.

" May it then be your care, brethren, very conſtantly, in all your addreſſes at the throne of grace, to ſeek the guidance of the bleſſed ſpirit, both for your paſtors and yourſelves. Be often at the feet of Jeſus for divine inſtruction —watch over your own hearts—and endeavour

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to preſerve a truly ſpiritual frame of ſoul—keep up the uſeful practice of reading the word of God, and prayer in your families, and beware of a formal ſpirit in the diſcharge of thoſe duties.—Teach your children and ſervants that they are ſinners and need a Saviour. Aſk yourſelves very frequently—Do I live under the exerciſe of grace? Is a throne of grace precious to me, in private? Let the gates of Zion ever be delightful to you, and appear there in ſeaſon. Rejoice at opportunities of ſeeking the face of Jacob's God. Stand in a readineſs for your maſter's appearance, with your loins girt about, in a waiting poſture of ſoul. Look to yourſelves, brethren, ſee that none of you fail of the grace of God. Take care that ye hide not the accurſed thing, either in your houſe or heart, leſt ye bring the fire of God on yourſelves, and trouble the camp of the Lord. Strive to live a comfortable and uſeful life, and remember, that is a life of communion with God. Live in peace, and the God of love and peace be with you. Amen.

BREVIATES.

" *Harlow, Eſſex, June 16th,* 1778.

" Tueſday evening, 5 o'clock. Miniſters, meſſengers, members of the aſſociated, and other

other churches met at the meeting-houſe. The rev. Mr. Gould prayed. Mr. Jones was choſen moderator. Mr. Blaine ſecretary. The church at Over, Cambridgeſhire, admitted. Secretary read the letters. General ſtate of the churches diſcuſſed. Reſolved, on a motion made by the church at Cambridge, That the churches in this aſſociation obſerve Monday, October 12th, 1778, as a general faſt. Examined and approved the *plan of lectures on the principles of nonconformity*, drawn up by our brother Robinſon, and agreed to adopt and recommend it.—Brother Blaine nominated to write the circular letter.—Moderator prayed, and adjourned the aſſembly.

" Wedneſday morning, 6 o'clock. The ſame aſſembly met again.—Mr. Robinſon prayed.—Debated the expediency of regulating the admiſſion of charitable caſes from other churches, and agreed to recommend only ſuch as were well atteſted by ſome member of the aſſociation.—Secretary read his plan of the circular letter, which was approved.—Moderator prayed—and adjourned the aſſembly.

" Half paſt 10 o'clock.—Public worſhip begun with ſinging pſalm cxxxii.—Mr. Morris prayed—ſung pſalm lxxxiv.—Mr. Geard preached from 1. Theſſ. v. 25. *Brethren, pray for us.*—Sung pſalm cii. two verſes.—Mr. Walker

prayed—ſung pſalm cxxxiii. two verſes.—Mr. Giles preached from Eph. iii. 8. *Unto me, who am leſs than the leaſt of all ſaints, is this grace given, that I ſhould preach among the Gentiles the unſearchable riches of Chriſt.*—Sung cxix. hymn of the firſt book.—Mr. Sleap concluded in prayer.

" Six in the evening.—Mr. Brown prayed.—Mr. Robinſon preached from Iſaiah ii. 5, 6. *O houſe of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord. Therefore thou haſt forſaken thy people, the houſe of Jacob, becauſe they be repleniſhed from the eaſt, and are ſoothſayers like the Philiſtines, and they pleaſe themſelves in the children of ſtrangers.*—Mr. Clark prayed—and diſmiſſed the aſſembly.

" Thurſday morning, 6 o'clock.—Met again—Mr. Robinſon prayed.—The caſe of the church at Cardington-end, Bedfordſhire, read, approved, and recommended.—The next aſſociation to be held at Colnbrook, Bucks, on the Tueſday and Wedneſday in Whitſun week, 1779. Meſſrs. Jones and Robinſon to preach on the Wedneſday.—The ſervices to begin at the uſual times."

III. *To*

III.

To the Two Congregations of Proteſtant Diſſenters in Cambridge, the following Memorial is humbly preſented.

" CHriſtianity owes its inſtitution to the love of God, and is admirably calculated to rectify the diſorders, in which ſin has evidently involved all mankind; and then only can it be ſaid fully to anſwer the benevolent deſigns of its divine author, when the wolf lies down with the lamb, and the leopard dwells with the kid, or, what is the ſame, when Barbarians, Scythians, bond and free, are one in Chriſt Jeſus; who ceaſing to daub with the untempered mortar of party zeal, join together in building a church, founded in faith, and cemented by love, at once glorious to God, and advantageous to men.

" It is not now neceſſary to inquire by what means ſo many diviſions have been made in the church of Chriſt: it is enough to obſerve, that they were neither authoriſed by Chriſt, nor encouraged by his apoſtles. The lord, above all things, preſſed the neceſſity of union and love; and the apoſtle Paul ordered ſome of the firſt churches to mark that man who

cauſed diviſions, and to avoid ſuch an one, doubtleſs becauſe ſuch a dividing ſpirit was as deſtructive of their peace as of Chriſt's command; wherever encouraged, would diſſolve the church into parties, till true religion evaporated, leaving the unhappy partiſans only a name to live, while in fact they were dead. If the whole moral law is contained in one word, Love; if the whole goſpel is a ſyſtem of love; if love is that badge whereby men are known to be Chriſt's diſciples; if when all the graces of the ſpirit are reduced to three, the greateſt of theſe three is love; if that legiſlator, who has enjoined every duty, has, twice in the New Teſtament, aſſured us that he requires us, above all things, to have fervent love among ourſelves, ſurely he muſt be totally ignorant of God, the law, the goſpel, human nature, and his own heart alſo, who can diſpenſe with the abſence of ſo neceſſary a Chriſtian temper for any circumſtantial in religion,—who thinks himſelf authoriſed to divide from a ſociety, and ceaſe to love the members of it, merely on account of ſome ſmall difference in ſentiment, or practice. This I will venture to ſay, that nothing has ſo much contributed to weaken the church of Chriſt,—nothing has had ſo great an hand, in reducing her to her preſent feeble condition, as the unchriſtian and impolitic diviſions of her members.

bers, who ought never to make two churches, where one would do: for while, by such means, they serve a party, they disserve real religion. Such (as a sensible writer says) are friends of the church, but enemies of God, and from such a spirit, the Lord deliver all honest-hearted Christians. If the above-mentioned Christian, and pacific tempers are needful any where, if the above reasons are weighty any where, they are at Cambridge, and so much the more needful there, as the situation is more conspicuous in the eyes of a whole university, than in a small village, or a common market town. Whoever reflects on the former and present state of affairs among the dissenters at Cambridge, will conclude so.

"In Mr. Hussey's time, the church was the largest and the most flourishing of any in the country. He left Cambridge in the year 1720: forty-six years are elapsed since, during which time, they have been broke into five or six parts: they are now collected into two, but no man has seen both flourish together: when one has increased, the other has visibly decreased. "It is humbly conceived that there is a voice in this dispensation, and that he who bestows his influences thus, designs to teach us a lesson of unity. The good Lord preserve us from refusing him that speaketh. Since, therefore, one

of the congregations is at preſent without a paſtor, it is preſumed to be both the duty, and intereſt of the two ſocieties to become one; the lawfulneſs and expediency of which may be juſtified from the following conſiderations.

" Firſt, There does not ſubſiſt any difference between the two congregations in doctrine, or diſcipline, except the ſingle article of baptiſm, (which alſo ſubſiſts in one of the churches already;: and that difference (as both churches allow) is not ſufficient to divide a people; for it is to be obſerved, that thoſe reaſons which will juſtify two churches continuing aſunder, will alſo juſtify one church in dividing into two; but where no ſuch reaſons are, it is plain, a junction is lawful. It is taken for granted, that if the two were one, no member would think there was a juſt cauſe of ſeparation; and if there is no cauſe of making two, there can be no cauſe of keeping ſo.

" Secondly, We have a precedent for the practice in the firſt churches. Then circumciſion, keeping of ancient Jewiſh, or gentile feſtivals, eating and abſtaining from certain meats, were bones of contention among Jews and Gentiles: yet it is ſaid, to the honour of Chriſt, that he made of twain one new man, ſo making peace: and good reaſon there was

for their being one: the kingdom of God is neither meats, nor drinks, but righteouſneſs, peace and joy in the holy ghoſt: let us, therefore, follow after the things that make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.

" Thirdly, We have alſo an expreſs command for ſuch a work, Rom. 15. 7. " Receive ye one another," that is the duty exhorted to, "as Chriſt has received us,"—that the rule, by which we are to do the duty, " to the glory of God;" that is the end to be anſwered by a compliance. If Chriſt therefore has received both churches, both are here exhorted to receive each other. If we have a divine command, an authentic evidence of precedents, and no difference ſubſiſting to tempt us to act contrary, the lawfulneſs of an union is clear beyond contradiction.

" The expedience of the ſtep appears by obſerving, firſt, that it is the true intereſt of the diſſenters (as of all other aſſociations engaged in one deſign) to be unanimous. If diviſions have weakened the cauſe, as they evidently have, a junction muſt of neceſſity ſtrengthen it: two are better than one, and a threefold cord is not eaſily broken. To think that this would weaken the cauſe in Cambridge by reducing two churches into one, is a miſtake; for one ſociety

of one hundred members is ſtronger than three of fifty members each, as will eaſily appear to every conſiderate perſon.

" Secondly, An union would annihilate all thoſe unbecoming bickerings, jealouſies, and cavillings, which almoſt always attend the members of two ſocieties ſo near neighbours. Some will always (through miſtaken zeal) be guilty of ſuch things, imagining that the weakening of one church is the ſtrength of the other: but when one cauſe only is on foot, the weakeſt muſt perceive that the intereſt of one is the intereſt of all; and all the former animoſities, being but effects of a diviſion, muſt needs die with the cauſe that produced them.

" Thirdly, It is abſolutely expedient now, when one congregation is broken by an unhappy faction iſſuing in the withdrawment of ſeveral members. This is the ready, and, perhaps, only way of reclaiming them; and when the other congregation is conſcientiouſly inquiſitive how to act towards thoſe members of the other place, who came amongſt them; to carry it at a diſtance is to behave uncivilly, and looks like want of love: and to enter into cloſe connections, is to weaken and offend a ſiſter church: therefore as they are obliged to have ſome, the ſame ſpirit enables them to embrace

all

all the church: and to ſay all in one word, an union removes the difficulties on both ſides.

"Fourthly, Such an union would be much to the credit and reputation of religion, ſeeing it would enable the diſſenters in Cambridge to acquit themſelves generouſly to their poor, and to other good works which now are not to be done without burdening ſubſcribers too much. The maintenance of one miniſter, and expenſe of one meeting-houſe being ſaved one way enables the people to do more another.—How pleaſing the proſpect! A large church walking in love,—a reſpectable congregation,—a miniſter well provided for,—poor comfortably aſſiſted,—every thing done with credit and honour: how preferable ſuch a caſe to the narrow views of any partiſan whatever! and all this noble acquiſition (grateful to all but bigots) the eaſy purchaſe of the ſpirit of love!—Robinſon begs leave to ſubjoin: that to all this it may be objected—that though the flouriſhing ſtate of the people, who make theſe propoſals, muſt convince all the world that they are conſtrained to do it only by love, and not for any low ſiniſter ends, yet this is to impoſe a miniſter on a whole congregation, whom, though they reſpect, yet they would not chooſe for their paſtor.—Robinſon's reply is this:

That

" That he is conſcious of his incapacity, and wiſhes the Lord had beſtowed on him gifts acceptable enough, to ſerve the people in this caſe; and ſince the lord had not been pleaſed to do ſo, he nevertheleſs, earneſtly wiſhes the proſperity of Sion, and hereby promiſes to cede his paſtoral office to any other miniſter, in whom the two congregations can unite, provided it can be done, and his removal agreed to by (as he does not ſee why it ſhould not) his own people."

IV. " From

IV.

" FROM January the firſt, to June the twenty-fourth, there was diſtributed among the poor, of the church and auditory, in St. Andrew's pariſh, in money, cloathing, and firing, &c. twenty-five pounds, one ſhilling. The paſtor obſervng how much œconomy is unknown to the bulk of the poor, how ſtrong the temptation of thoſe who live poorly is to ſpend the money given them about their bellies, and how much credit to the cauſe, and comfort to themſelves, the poor would bring, if the money was laid out in educating their children, cloathing their families, laying in firing, allowing ſome old people weekly payments, &c. adviſed the deacons to procure their conſent to ſuch an uſe of their money. This was eaſily obtained, and many of their families were benefited this way. " Laſt Chriſtmas," ſays he, " the deacons purchaſed forty ells of hemping, at 1s. 4d. per ell, which they diſtributed in ſhirting, ſhifting, &c.—forty-five baize, at 1s. 1d. per yard, for petticoats, beſides ſtockings, handkerchiefs, and flannel waiſtcoats.—Mr. Ebenezer Hollick gave twenty-ſix yards of cloth for coats and waitcoats, valued at 3s. per yard.—Mr. Smith gave ſhirts, ſhifts, and handkerchiefs, at 2l. value.—Mr. Foſter gave thirty

buſhels

buſhels of coals, about 1l. 10s. 1d. value.—Mr. William Hollick paid for making the coats.—Two children of the widow Pottage, one of William Johnſon, &c. &c. have been taught to read, write, &c. by the deacons' allowances;—two widows, and two old men have weekly payments;—ſome have had ſo much in time of ſickneſs, &c. and gifts of money repeatedly beſides. The whole of the laſt ſix months is about 25l. All this is ſupported by one public collection at Chriſtmas, by Lord's ſupper, and by private gifts."

V. A ge-

V.

A general view of the preſent ſtate of the proteſtant diſſenting intereſt in England, and Wales, now bearing a public teſtimony againſt the errors of the national church, communicated to me by my moſt worthy friend, the reverend Mr. Thomſon, Feb. 24, 1775.

Counties.	*Number of Churches.*	*Baptiſts.*
Bedfordſhire	19	17
Berkſhire	14	5
Buckinghamſhire	25	15
Cambridgeſhire	21	7
Cheſhire	24	3
Cornwall	7	2
Cumberland	17	4
Derbyſhire	32	8
Devonſhire	61	14
Dorſetſhire	24	1
Durham	15	3
Eſſex	49	15
Glouceſterſhire	46	24
Hampſhire	28	8
Herefordſhire	9	3
Hertfordſhire	18	9
Huntingdonſhire	15	7
Kent	46	39
Lancaſhire	62	13
Leiceſterſhire	39	23
Lincolnſhire	22	16
Middleſex	86	13

Counties.

Counties.	*Number of Churches.*	*Baptiſts.*
Monmouthſhire	13	6
Norfolk	21	9
Northamptonſhire	37	17
Northumberland	40	3
Nottinghamſhire	19	10
Oxfordſhire	11	2
Rutlandſhire	5	3
Shropſhire	11	3
Somerſetſhire	53	15
Staffordſhire	14	0
Suffolk	33	3
Surry	12	2
Suſſex	19	12
Warwickſhire	23	10
Weſtmorland	3	0
Wiltſhire	39	19
Worceſterſhire	16	7
Yorkſhire	70	20

VI. The

VI.—— The Preſent State of Non-conformity in Cambridgeſhire, 1775.

Towns.	*Denominations.*	*Paſtors or Miniſters.*	*Members.*	*Hearers.*
Cambridge	P. Baptiſt	R. Robinſon, P.	120	600
——	Independent	Rev. Joſeph Saunders, P. 1767		
——	Preſbyterian	Rev. —— Robotham, P.		
Barwell	Independent	Rev. Joſeph Maulden, P.		200
Catlidge	Independent	Rev. —— Morley, M.	20	100
Cottenham	Independent	Rev. Joſeph Billing, M.		300
Everſden and Barringdon	Independent	Rev. John Bond, P. 1750		
Gamlinghay	P. Baptiſt	Rev. Benjamin Morgan, P.		
Guihorn	P. Baptiſt	Supplied by R. James Parker.		
Iſleham	Independent	Rev. Sam. Lambert, P.		
Linton	Independent	Rev. Thomas Curtis, P.	27	
March	P. Baptiſt			
Melbourne	G. Baptiſt	Rev. Thomas Barron, P.		30
——	Independent	Rev. Richard Cooper, P.		
Fulbourne	G. Baptiſt	Rev. Thomas Barron, P.		20
Over	Independent	Rev. Richard Emery.		100
Royſton	Independent	Rev. Thomas Wells, P.		
Soham	Independent	Rev. Thomas Adam, P.		100
——	P. Baptiſt	Rev. Andrew Fuller, M.		100
Willingham	Independent	Rev. Thomas Boodyer, P.		200
Wiſbich	P. Baptiſt	Rev. John Eve, P.		100
Wilbraham	G. Baptiſt	Rev. Thomas Barron, P.		20

N. B. P. Baptiſt ſtands for particular baptiſt. G. Baptiſt, for general baptiſt. P. and M. for paſtor and miniſter.

*** The reader will pleaſe to take notice, that, of the churches, whoſe members are not reckoned up, ſome were large. Why they are paſſed by, I know not.

VII.

" THE particular baptiſt church of Chriſt, at Cambridge, to the churches of the ſame faith and order in aſſociation at Cambridge, May 13 and 14, 1777, wiſheth grace and peace.

" REVEREND AND DEAR BRETHREN,

" We beg leave to approach you in the moſt cordial affection,—and to aſſure you, although we do not think ourſelves worthy of the honour of receiving you under our roof,—yet we rejoice in the privilege of which we are poſſeſſed by your doing ſo. We have therefore appointed Meſſrs. Foſter and Hollick,—the firſt, one of our junior deacons, and the laſt one of our worthy auditors, to ſuperintend this aſſociation, for the accommodation of the miniſters, leſt they ſhould be hindered in proſecuting the laudable deſign of their aſſembling; and for the proviſion of conveniencies for our poor country members, leſt they ſhould be deprived of the benefit of attending.

" We have alſo appointed our two ſenior deacons, Meſſrs. Tyſon and Whitby, our meſſengers to accompany our paſtor to this aſſociation. We bleſs God, we are in peaceable, proſperous, and increaſing circumſtances as a

church. We have much to lament, as individuals, and many things to amend, reform and improve, as a body; but our God is as good as he is great, and to him we look up for ſupply.

" We look back with horror on thoſe paſt times of perſecution, which denied our anceſtors the liberty of publicly contending for the faith once delivered to the ſaints. We ſtill keep their original deſign in view, of reforming the church to its primitive ſimplicity; and we adopt this method of communion with other churches, by annual aſſociation, as a branch of primitive religion, which, under the divine bleſſing, may be productive of great ſpiritual advantages to us and our poſterity, unleſs our own folly defeat your good deſigns.

" We confeſs, brethren, we entered this aſſociation with great jealouſy and caution; for although we clearly ſaw the practice of aſſociating, conſulting, and mutually aſſiſting in the pureſt ages of chriſtianity, yet we could not but recollect, that ſuch aſſociations were in the end productive of the great antichriſtian apoſtaſy, an apoſtaſy ſo fatal to the civil and religious liberties of mankind, and particularly to thoſe of the brave old puritans and nonconformiſts, that the very words, Synod, and

Seſſion, Council, and Canon, yet make both the ears of a ſound proteſtant diſſenter to tingle. This branch of primitive godlineſs, we think, is not to be rejected; and we praiſe you, brethren, that you have precluded all complaints, ſilenced all our fears, and given us entire ſatisfaction on this article, by ſo fully and explicitly renouncing all kind of juriſdiction over conſcience. We venerate the communion of the ſaints:—and as you come by our own invitation,—pretend to no authority over us,—do not even take the liberty to interrogate us on any other articles than thoſe which we chooſe to lay before you,—and then offer us advice, but not law; we bid you a Chriſtian welcome, and bleſs God for granting us the honour and the pleaſure of this interview.

"Permit us, brethren, only to add, that ſince it is with newly incorporated ſocieties as it is with young plants,—and that ply may be given with a very little trouble at firſt, which no labour can produce afterward,—we pray that a double portion of penetration and diſintereſtedneſs, unanimity and prudence, gentleneſs and benevolence, may be beſtowed upon you; may your motives and aims ſtill continue to be pure, and all your tranſactions be full of evidence of your pure intentions—may this—may every future aſſociation, be a new preparation for, and

and pleaſing prelibation of that general aſſociation of the church of the firſt-born, to which, through grace, we hope ſhortly to come.

"JOHN STANFORD.

"Cambridge, April 17, 1777.

"Second quarterly meeting, ſigned by order of all the church."

VIII.

" THE generous deſign of the reverend Andrew Gifford, of introducing into the baptiſt churches ſound and ſufficient learning, and, for this purpoſe, of beſtowing certain valuable original paintings, books, &c. in order to a foundation, would have been glorious in any man, and is moſt of all ſo in a man whoſe abilities and merit have not been ſufficiently underſtood in ſome few of our leading churches. The baptiſt cauſe wants only learning to give it credit and ſucceſs.—The doctor having condeſcended to impart his deſign to a friend, his friend, with the utmoſt deference to the doctor's ſuperior judgment, ventures to affirm, that the project, which is noble in itſelf, may be rendered effectual to the ends propoſed, by founding an houſe to be ſupported by a trading company: there are only three ways of ſupporting ſuch a houſe,—ſubſcription,—endowment,—and trade. The way of ſubſcription is troubleſome, annual, precarious, and ſmall. That of endowment, either in the rents of lands or houſes, or in the intereſt of monies, requires a large capital, and produces ſmall ſtipends.

" The way of trade is moſt eligible. Subſcriptions,

ſcriptions, legacies, and donations may raiſe a capital, and proper men may be empowered to employ it in trade, applying the profits to the ſupport of the houſe. The houſes of the Jeſuits have been ſupported by this method ;—the American congreſs have obtained independence, by acting in the capacity of a trading company; and of old, the practice was authoriſed by the higheſt authority ; for Solomon built the temple with money obtained by trade.—In order to realiſe theſe ideas, then, the following articles are propoſed.

" I. Let doctor Gifford draw up his plan of education, and let him calculate the expenſes attending it. It is ſuppoſed a few boys might be lodged and boarded in a private houſe at Cambridge, and in four years educated by the profeſſors there, at the fountain-head, at no very great expenſe.

" II. Let the doctor, by deed properly executed, conſign over to certain gentlemen nominated by himſelf, whatever he thinks proper to contribute towards this foundation : let theſe men hold in truſt, under certain conditions, one of which may be,—that, in caſe a plan which the doctor propoſes, can be effected in ſuch a time, then the doctor's donations ſhall be applied ſo and ſo; and if not, then they, the company in

truſt, ſhall depoſit what they hold in ſuch or ſuch places, or ſhall deliver them to ſuch or ſuch perſons as the doctor ſhall appoint.

" III. Let a ſubſcription be opened for a capital ſum to be employed in trade, at the diſcretion of the company in truſt, and let certain perſons for the time being,—the lord chancellor, the .... and the .... be appointed viſitors of this foundation, who ſhall determine finally, whether this truſt have been faithfully diſcharged.

" IV. Let the company be directed to reſerve a part of the annual profit ariſing from their commerce year after year, till they have accumulated a ſum ſufficient to purchaſe or build a houſe, to be called the Baptiſt-college; and let the firſt and beſt room in it be called the Giffordian room, and uſed always to contain the pictures, &c. of the ſaid Dr. Gifford.

" V. Let there be an annual commemoration of benefactors, by an oration in memory of the benefactors, and particularly of the reverend founder,—then let there be a general meeting, —divine worſhip in the chapel,—an oration commemorative in the hall,—a choice of officers,—an audit of accounts, and a public dinner. Theſe keep things from being forgotten and loſt.

It

" It is pretty certain many rich baptiſts would contribute largely to ſuch a foundation; and a donation, ſuch as the doctor's, would be a ſtrong inducement to it, were it conducted by proper perſons.—May the God of all grace, who hath always preſerved theſe our poor churches in their low eſtate, mercifully ſhine on this plan of public utility!"

IX.

ON reading Robinſon's Plan of a New College, many reflections naturally ariſe on the monopoly of literature, and the impolicy of excluſive eſtabliſhments; but as theſe have already been purſued to a conſiderable extent, in my "Inquiry into the Nature of Subſcription to the Thirty-nine Articles*," they ſhall not be indulged again. It ſhall only be added, that, with reſpect to the different religioniſts among proteſtants, this monopoliſing ſpirit in our public inſtitutions is not only contrary to the claims of common juſtice, but to the intentions of the original founders. It was ungracious and impolitic, to narrow the terms of admiſſion into theſe houſes by ſubſequent ſtatutes, inſtead of widening them according to the circumſtances of the times. Such conduct is not only unjuſt, but tends to perpetuate a kind of quackery in the ſciences†.

* See the Firſt Part of the Second Edition.

† On the reaſons why ſcience is made ſo difficult of attainment, ſee ſome excellent obſervations in a moſt uſeful and learned little work entitled the "Memoirs of Planetes, pp. 102, 103. Theſe obſervations are well illuſtrated in "A Propoſal for facilitating the Progreſs of Science, exemplified in the Oſteological part of Anatomy." See "A Triplet of Inventions, by Thomas Northmore," publiſhed for Owen, Piccadilly.

To

To theſe inſtitutions, thus circumſcribed, I cannot forbear accommodating the words of an old divine, taken from a curious ſermon, preached at Paul's Croſs, 1550 *.

" By the whyche euerye man maye perceyue that the kynge geuyng manye thynges and takynge nothinge from the uniuerſityes, was very deſirous to have them increaſed and amended. Howbeit all they that have knowen the unyuerſitye of Cambryge ſence that tyme that it dyd fyrſt begynne to receyue theſe greate and manyefolde benefytes from the kynges majeſtye, at youre handes, haue juſt occaſion to ſuſpecte that you have deceyued boeth the kynge and uniuerſitie, to enryche youreſelues.

* A ſermon preached at Paul's Croſs the 14th day of December, by Thomas Lever. The reader will perceive, that the above ſingular paſſage is rather forced into my ſervice, and quoted in a way of accommodation. Indeed it was introduced, in a great meaſure, for the ſake of the very curious particulars at the cloſe, which, it muſt be acknowledged, are not connected with the ſubject; though from this extract may be inferred the injuſtice of the preſent monopoliſing ſpirit in our univerſities. I am indebted, for the loan of this book, to the ingenious Dr. Farmer. From the contents of the ſermon, I intended to have illuſtrated ſomething in the body of this work; but I did not receive it in time. Part of it has been pointed out before by Dr. Farmer, and printed by Dr. Percy and others.

For before that you did beginne to be the diſpoſers of the kinges liberalitye towardes learnyng and pouerty, there were in houſes belongyng unto the univerſytye of Cambryge, two hundred ſtudentes of dyuynytye, many verye well learned; whyche bee nowe all clene gone, houſe and manne, young towarde ſcholers, and old fatherlye doctors, not one of them lefte: one hundred alſo of an other ſorte that hauying rych frendes or beyng benefyced men did lyue of theym ſelues in oſtles and innes be eyther gon awaye, or elles fayne to crepe into colleges, and put poore men from bare lyuynges. Thoſe bothe be all gone, and a ſmall number of poore godly dylygent ſtudentes nowe remaynynge only in colleges be not able to tary and contynue theyr ſtudye in y^e^ uniuerſitye for lacke of exibicion and healpe. There be dyuers ther whych ryſe dayly betwixt foure and fyue of the clocke in the mornynge, and from fyue untyll ſyxe of the clocke, uſe common prayer wyth an exhortacion of gods worde in a common chappell, and from ſixe unto ten of the clocke uſe ever eyther pryuate ſtudy or commune lectures. At ten of the clocke they go to dynner, whereas they be contente with a penye pyece of byefe amongeſt iiii. havyng a fewe porage made of the brothe of the ſame byefe, wyth ſalte and otemell, and nothynge els.

" After

" After thys ſlender dinner they be either teachynge or learnynge untyll v. of the clocke in the euenyng, when as they haue a ſupper not much better then theyr dyner. Immedyatelye after the whyche, they go eyther to reaſonyng in problemes or unto ſome other ſtudye, untyll it be nyne or tenne of the clocke, and there beyng without fyre are fayne to walk or runne up and downe halfe an houre, to gette a heate on their feete whan they go to bed.

" Theſe be menne not werye of theyr paynes, but very ſorye to leue theyr ſtudye: and ſure they be not able ſome of theym to contynue for lacke of neceſſarye exibicion & relefe. Theſe be the lyuyng ſayntes whyche ſerue god takyng greate paynes in abſtinence, ſtudye, laboure and dylygence, wyth watching and prayer. Wherefore as Paule, for the ſayntes and brethren at Hieruſalem, ſo I for your brethren and ſayncte at Cambrydge mooſte humblye beſeche you make youre colleccions amongeſt you rich marchauntes of this citye, and ſend them youre oblacions unto the unyuerſytye, ſo ſhall ye be ſure to pleaſe God, to comfort theim, and prouyde learned men to do muche good throughout all thys realme. Yea and truly ye be detters unto theim: for they haue ſowen amongeſte you the ſpirituall treaſures of goddes worde,

worde, for the whyche they ought to repe of you agayne corporall neceſſaries. But to return unto them that ſhoulde better haue prouyded for learnynge and pouertye in all places, but eſpecyally in the uniuerſities.

" Loke whether that there was not a greate number of both lerned & pore that might haue ben kepte, mayntayned, and relyeued in the uniuerſities: whych lackying all healpe or comforte, were compelled to forſake the unyuerſitye, leve their bokes, & ſeeke theyr lyuynge abrode in the country? Yea & in the cuntry manye grammar ſcholes founded of a godly intent to brynge up poore mennes ſonnes in learnynge and vertue, nowe be taken awye by reaſon of the gredye couetouſnes of you that were put in truſt by God, and the kynge to erecte and make grammer ſcholes in many places: and had neyther commandement nor permiſſion to take away the ſcholmaſters lyuyng in anye place, moreouer muche charitable almes was there in manye places yerely to be beſtowed in pore townes and pariſhes upon goddes people, the kynges ſubiectes: whiche almes to y^e^ great dyſpleaſure of god and dyſhonoure of the kinge, yea and contrarye to goddes worde and the kynges lawes, ye haue taken awaye. I knowe what ye do ſaye and bragge

bragge in ſome places: that ye haue doen as ye were commaunded wyth as much charytye and lyberalitye towardes both pouertye and learnynge, as youre commiſſion woulde beare and ſuffer."

X.

Chronological Catalogue of the Various Publications of the late Robert Robinſon.

" I. A Tranſlation of a few of Saurin's Sermons: printed in 1770, for Fletcher and Hodſon, Cambridge.

" II. The Nature and Neceſſity of early Piety: a Sermon, preached to a Society of young People, at Willingham, Cambridgeſhire, 4to. Printed for Fletcher and Hodſon, Cambridge, 1772. A ſecond edition of this Sermon was printed by William Pine, Briſtol, 8vo. 1777.

" III. Arcana; or, the Principles of the late Petitioners to Parliament for Relief in the Matter of Subſcription. In Eight Letters to a Friend. 1. On Candour in Controverſy. 2. On Uniformity in Religion. 3. On the Right of private Judgment. 4. On Civil Magiſtracy. 5. On Innovation. 6. On Orthodoxy. 7. On Perſecution. 8. On Sophiſtry. 8vo. printed for Fletcher and Hodſon, Cambridge, and Dilly, London.

" IV. A curious Diſcuſſion of the Queſtion, Is it Lawful and Right for a Man to marry the Siſter

Sifter of his deceafed Wife? 8vo. publifhed in the Appendix to the Legal Degrees of Marriage; ftated and confidered—by John Allcyne, Barrifter at Law. Second Edition, 1775, printed for Almon.

"V. A Lecture on a becoming Behaviour in Religious Affemblies; delivered on Sunday Evening, January 10, 1773, at the Meeting-houfe, in St. Andrew's, Cambridge; and printed at Cambridge, 1776.

"VI. A Plea for the Divinity of our Lord Jefus Chrift: in a Paftoral Letter, addreffed to a Congregation of Proteftant Diffenters, at Cambridge. 8vo. printed for Fletcher and Hodfon, Cambridge, and Keith, &c. London, 1776.

"The Fourth Edition of this Tract was publifhed in 1780. It obtained for the author many compliments from dignitaries of the eftablifhed church, and offers of confiderable preferment.

"VII. The Circular Letter of the Eaftern Affociation, held at Hemel Hempftead, Herts, May, 1776.

"VIII. The Hiftory and Myftery of Good Friday. 8vo. Buckland, London, 1777.

"To

" To Philip Anthony De la Faye, eſq. this bagatelle, written at his requeſt, is with profound reſpect, inſcribed by his moſt obedient, Lewis Carbonell. This ſmall Tract has been re-printed ſeveral times in 12mo.

"IX. A Plan of Lectures on the Principles of Nonconformity, for the Inſtruction of Catechumens. 8vo. Cambridge, Hodſon, 1778. A fifth edition was printed for Macgowan, London, 1781, with an additional Preface, 12mo. This Work has been cited more than once in both Houſes of Parliament. On ſome detached paſſages in theſe Lectures, Edmund Burke grounded a very unjuſtifiable attack on the principles of the diſſenters, in the laſt debate, on the motion of Charles Fox, for the repeal of the Corporation and Teſt Acts. The attack was ably repelled by the mover.

" X. Sermons, tranſlated from the Original French of the late James Saurin, Paſtor of the French Church, at the Hague. In 4 vols. 8vo. printed at Cambridge, in 1775, 1777, and 1782, and publiſhed by ſubſcription. A ſecond edition, comprehending 5 vols. was printed for Dilly, London, in 1784. Each of theſe volumes is introduced with an excellent Preface, by the tranſlator. In the Preface to the firſt volume, we have Memoirs of the

face to the firſt volume, we have Memoirs of the Reformation in France, and of the Life of Mr. Saurin. To the ſecond are prefixed Remarks on Deiſm. The third contains juſt and animated Reflections on Chriſtian Liberty, and Human Explications of a Divine Revelation. The fourth volume is introduced with Obſervations on the Nature and Obligations of Man, and on the Moral Influence of the Goſpel. To this volume is annexed M. Dumont's Eſſay on the Conduct of David at the Court of Achiſh, King of Gath, in a Letter to M. Saurin. This writer ſuppoſes, that David was ſeized with a real epilepſy, occaſioned by terror, and directed by Providence for his greater ſecurity. The Preface to the fifth volume contains critical Remarks on the character of M. Saurin, as a Preacher; and ſpecifies various particulars in doctrine, rites, diſcipline, and other circumſtances, in which the tranſlator diſagrees with him.

XI. Chriſtianity, a Syſtem of Humanity, &c. A Sermon in behalf of the Charity-School, at Horſley-down, Southwark; preached at Salters'-hall, March 3, 1779. Printed for Buckland, London.

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liſhed

*

liſhed (i. e.) *Jewiſh Ceremonies, by which the God of this World hath blinded the Minds of them which believe not, &c.* The deſign of the Sermon is to vindicate the worſhip of our Non-conformiſt churches, by giving an anſwer to this plain queſtion, *Why do we reſpect the Ceremonies of the Jewiſh Religion, and reject the ſame Ceremonies in the Chriſtian Religion?*

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*** This Catalogue is taken from the end of Dr. Rees's Sermons.

ERRATA.

Page 47, Notes, for *third*, read *fourth*.
52, l. 17, for 1775, read 1765.
67, l. 6, for *Michael*, read *Richard*.
113, l. 24, for *third*, read *fourth*.
114, l. 11, dele *.
209, l. 10, for *cafes*, read *cares*.
284, Notes, for *Charles*, read *Cadogan*.
302, l. 2, for *pronounce*, read *pronounced*.
400, verſe 2, l. 3, for *yea*, read *ye*.

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